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THE
WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH
AND THE
THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE LEGAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS
OF SUBSCRIPTION TO THEM

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THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE LEGAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF SUBSCRIPTION TO THEM

BY

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PREFACE

IN the case of the Free Church of Scotland Appeals, which came before the House of Lords 1903–4, the judges stated their opinion that Churches must adhere strictly to the creeds which they profess in the sense which the framers of the creeds attached to the words of these creeds. The application of this opinion to established Churches is simple. The laws of the country fix the creeds which are to be believed, and determine the formula of adhesion to the creeds and to the ritual of the Churches which each priest or minister has to subscribe or assent to. In the first chapters of my book I have brought before my readers the principal Articles of the Creeds of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, and I ask them to study these and consider whether it is reasonable to expect that cultivated men can subscribe these Articles as articles of their own faith. I have not attempted to discuss

the subjects fully, but simply to supply materials for thought.

The case of the United Free Church is not so clear. That Church claims that it has acquired the right to alter the dogmas of its creed, and to determine the measure of adhesion which is to be demanded of its ministers and elders. It also maintains that those who bequeathed or presented sums of money to the Church did so on the express understanding that the General Assembly was to be the final arbiter of all theological questions that might arise. The Church was advised by the lawyers whom it consulted that it had secured the objects at which it aimed by the legal provisions which it had made. The judges who discussed this question differed widely from each other, and the law of the case may be considered doubtful. But the lawyers of the United Free Church argued that, even supposing it had been an established Church, there was no proof that it had deviated from its creed. The moral and religious aspects of subscription by the United Free Church do not therefore properly come within the scope of my book. The Minority Free Church also affirmed that it had not deviated from the creed. I believe that both Churches have, in

fact, deviated from the Confession of Faith; that especially the United Free Church has given ample proof that many of its teachers are men of wide culture possessed with an ardent desire to reach the truth, and animated by the belief that it is only the truth that will make both learned and unlearned free. The same spirit does not seem to animate the Minority Free Church, and therefore there has not been much progress. But men in these days cannot altogether resist the movements of thought that are ever taking place, and if a committee of cultured theologians had been appointed to inquire into the state of matters, they would have found that a considerable number of the members of that Church did not understand the Articles of their creed, and that all had in some way or other deviated from it. I have therefore drawn attention to some of their beliefs. The men who framed the Confession of Faith were men of wide culture and great earnestness, and if they had been alive in the present day they would no doubt have rejected three-fourths of the special doctrines of the Minority Free Church.

I have felt a difficulty in knowing how to designate the various bodies concerned in the case. I have divided the Free Church of 1843 to 1900 into the

Majority Free Church and the Minority Free Church. The name of the Majority Free Church after 1900 is the United Free Church, but what name the Scotch people will attach to the Minority Free Church no one can tell, nor can anyone predict whether it will exist at all.

There is a difficulty also with the designation of the judges. They are known as the House of Lords, but some of the members of the House of Lords, who are not members of the legal profession, have expressed an anxiety that it should be clearly understood that the great majority of peers have had nothing to do with the decision. Only some of the legal peers are concerned in it.

I have had also to speak of the "higher criticism." Higher criticism is an unfortunate term. It means merely literary and historical criticism. Such criticism is applicable to every literature, and has been carried on in every age. It is part, for instance, of higher criticism to affirm that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, but most men in the present day regard this as bad higher criticism. In the same way it may be deemed geological criticism to say that the world was made in six days, but most geologists consider this as erroneous criticism

based on ignorance of the facts. It may also be part of astronomic criticism to say that the sun revolves round the earth, but astronomers regard such an affirmation as the result of bad methods of reasoning.

Since the last chapter was printed, I have heard that a much-respected Professor belonging to the Synod of the United Original Seceders has lectured to the Minority Free Church students in addition to the Professors I have mentioned. If I had known in time, I should have tried to find out whether he has written any books which indicate his relation to the Confession of Faith.

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THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

AND THE

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE SCOTCH CHURCH
THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

"CHAPTER I.—*Of the Holy Scripture*

"*Sec.* 1. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these :—

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis.	II. Chronicles.	Daniel.
Exodus.	Ezra.	Hosea.
Leviticus.	Nehemiah.	Joel.
Numbers.	Esther.	Amos.
Deuteronomy.	Job.	Obadiah.
Joshua.	Psalms.	Jonah.
Judges.	Proverbs.	Micah.
Ruth.	Ecclesiastes.	Nahum.
I. Samuel.	The Song of Songs.	Habakkuk.
II. Samuel.	Isaiah.	Zephaniah.
I. Kings.	Jeremiah.	Haggai.
II. Kings.	Lamentations.	Zechariah.
I. Chronicles.	Ezekiel.	Malachi.

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels according to Matthew.	Galatians.	The Epistle of James.
Mark.	Ephesians.	The first and second Epistles of Peter.
Luke.	Philippians.	The first, second, and third Epistles of John.
John.	Colossians.	The Epistle of Jude.
The Acts of the Apostles.	Thessalonians I.	The Revelation.
Paul's Epistles to the Romans.	Thessalonians II.	
Corinthians I.	To Timothy I.	
Corinthians II.	To Timothy II.	
	To Titus.	
	To Philemon.	
	The Epistle to the Hebrews.	

All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life."

This paragraph of the Confession settles definitely what books are to be reckoned Scripture. And the person who signs the Confession is debarred from making further inquiries into the matter. These books and these alone are the Scripture. But it is impossible for the mind that is in search of truth to rest here. The question must be raised, On whose authority are these books set apart as Scripture?

In regard to the Old Testament our information is scanty, and leaves much room for discussion. The Law—that is, the Pentateuch—was the first portion of the Bible that was deemed sacred. This is recorded as a fact in Ezra vii. 6 and Nehemiah, chapters viii.–x., and an extraordinary statement is made in 4 (2) Esdras, chapter xiv., especially verses 9–23, and also chapter xv. The dates of books containing

these references have to be investigated, and other references to the Law in Hebrew writings must be considered before a sound opinion can be formed as to how the Law was declared sacred and reckoned to be the Word of God.

The prophetico-historical books of the Old Testament were deemed sacred and allowed to be read in the Synagogues at a later date than the Law. This was done by the Scribes of Jerusalem and the Pharisees, and the worth of their opinion depends on the estimate which may be formed of their critical ability and their character. The Confession of Faith assumes their infallibility.

The canonization, as it is now called, of the Hagiographa, was not completed till two centuries after the Christian era. This was the work of the Scribes and Pharisees and then of the Jewish Rabbis. The truthseeker must inquire into the fitness of these persons to determine for all ages such important questions. For a time they differed much among themselves as to the books to be admitted into the Synagogue, and we know something of the reasons. These reasons ought to be submitted to the modern mind—but the Confession of Faith renders this impossible for one who signs it as his faith.

Appeal is often made to the opinion of Christ —but that is also matter for discussion. Christ quotes only two or three of the Hebrew writers by name, and He makes no quotation at all from a

considerable number of the books. He certainly was opposed to many of the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The New Testament is in the same position as the Old. It was not till the fourth century that it was finally determined what books should compose the New Testament. There was much dispute about the subject in the third century. Books were then held as Scripture which did not ultimately find a place in the New Testament, and it was maintained by some that several books now in the New Testament were not Scripture. The theological scholars of the present day have many more materials on which to form a judgment in regard to this matter, and they have a surer grasp of the principles on which a judgment should be formed. But all such inquiries are barred by the terms of the Confession of Faith, and those who sign it have to believe in the infallibility of the decisions of the monks and ecclesiastics, who finally closed the canon in the fourth century, and thus fixed the number of books in the New Testament.

Those who composed the Confession of Faith were anxious to throw themselves free from tradition, and they therefore discovered other reasons for their belief that the books which they have named in section 2, are the Word of God. They have expressed these in sections 4 and 5 of chapter 1, which are as follows :—

"*Sec.* 4. The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God."

"*Sec.* 5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."

The statement in section 4 assumes that the books named in section 2 are the word of God. It also assumes that Holy Scripture is one work, and that God is the author of it.

In section 5, the assertion is made that the perfection of the book proves that God is its author; but such an argument cannot take the place of historical research, and while some of the statements are true in regard to some books now included in Scripture, most people will doubt whether they can apply to some others of the books. Yet he who signs the Confession must deem the words true of all the books included in the canon, and they are debarred from

discussing the merits of any particular one of the books.

The last part of the section creates the greatest difficulty, for it appeals to the feelings of individuals. In one sense it is profoundly true, for it may be laid down that if any assertions in these books that the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of Holiness, makes a man feel to be inconsistent with holiness, or the love of man, he is bound to regard these as not having been made by God, who is all holiness and love. The statement thus appeals to a higher criticism, which is based on the moral nature of man. Applying such a test to a book like Esther, where the name of God is not mentioned, and which breathes a spirit of savage revenge, we may be certain that it is not the work of God, but of Hebrew Scribes and Pharisees. The Jewish writer Montefiore,[1] who tries to give the best aspects of the book, makes this confession: "The true reasons why we cannot regard the book of Esther as divine or inspired are, first, because of its spirit of cruelty and revenge, so that it is not too strong to say, with Dr. Adeney, that 'its last pages reek with blood'; and, secondly, because there is little compensation for this grave defect in any grandeur or beauty of teaching elsewhere." Surely it is grieving the Holy Spirit to attribute such a work to God, and yet he who signs the Confession of Faith does so.

[1] *The Bible for Home Reading.* Second Part, p. 405.

"*Sec.* 8. The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the scriptures, may have hope."

This section affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament have been immediately inspired by God, or, in other words, dictated by God, and that these texts have been, by God's singular care and providence—that is, miraculously—kept pure in all ages.

The first of these propositions is commonly called the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Now, the difficulties in the way of this opinion are enormous. The inquiries of modern scholars have led to a general, nearly a universal, belief that there is a strong human element in both the Old and New Testament, showing itself in discrepancies, in inaccuracies, and in various other ways. But he who signs the Confession of Faith must hold that there is not an error in the

books of Scripture from beginning to end, and that every statement in them made in regard to the structure of the earth and the heavens, that every historical assertion made in them, and that all opinions expressed in them, are the statements of Infallible God.

The second proposition affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament have been pure in all ages. No scholar can believe this. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament is allowed on all hands to be often corrupt and unintelligible. It is often impossible to come to a conclusion as to what the text really is, and it certainly differs widely from the text that must have been used by the Septuagint translators whom the Alexandrian Jews deemed inspired, and whose translation is most frequently used by the writers of the New Testament.

The case is the same with the New Testament. The number of various readings is enormous. The MSS. nearest the age of the Apostles present the widest divergencies from the *textus receptus*, and the scholars of the present day who have studied the papyri discovered in Egypt are strongly of opinion that it is in the early stages that corruptions are likely to have been inserted. "In the first stage of its existence, therefore," says Blass, "every Gospel was separate from other Gospels, and it is self-evident that during that stage it cannot have remained quite

unaltered and unadulterated. That very first age was also, as we have seen, that of least care in transcribing, and there was besides another reason for corruptions of a special kind."[1] Mr. Kenyon[2] makes similar statements and explains them. "It must be remembered that the circumstances of the tradition of the New Testament text (and especially in the case of the Gospels) for more than two hundred years were wholly unlike those of any other literary work. We have no great libraries enshrining standard copies of the precious volumes, no recognised book-trade multiplying carefully written transcripts of them, no scholars keeping a critical eye on the purity of the text. Instead of all this, we have roughly written copies circulating from hand to hand among congregations whose sole care was for the substance, not for the precise wording, of the Gospel narrative; we have the danger of destruction impending over them, if they were brought too prominently before the eye of the civil power; we have periods of persecution, during which active search was made for the sacred books of the prohibited sect. Circulating in this irregular fashion, and for the most part among populations with no high standards of literary tradition, it is not surprising that the text was often treated in a way to which we are not accustomed in dealing with the ordinary works of literature which have

[1] *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 77.
[2] *Handbook of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 304.

descended to us from the past. It would not seem unnatural, still less wrong, to insert additional incidents, believed to be authentic, in the narrative of our Lord's life; and verbal changes, whether of pronouns or proper names, or of one synonym for another, would be matters of indifference. To these causes of variation may be added the plausible, though not yet fully developed, suggestion of retranslation from the Syriac as a possible factor in the production of this type of text."

With such facts for us guaranteed by reverent men who are in the highest degree competent witnesses, how is it possible to subscribe the affirmation that the Hebrew and Greek texts of Scripture have been kept pure in all ages by God's singular care and providence? The man who signs such an affirmation must also affirm that all textual criticism is based on the wildest fancies of upright and skilful critics, whose eyes and minds have become subject to the strangest delusions.

"*Sec.* 9. The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, (which is not manifold, but one,) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly."

This section asserts that the meaning of Scripture is not manifold but one—in opposition to the allegorical methods of early Christianity and schoolmen,

who got any number of meanings out of the Biblical words.

"CHAPTER II.—*Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.*

"*Sec.* 3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

"CHAPTER VIII.—*Of Christ the Mediator.*

"*Sec.* 2. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."

The dogma of the Trinity was elaborated in the fourth century. That period was the period of the formation of creeds, and the history of it is filled with extraordinary discussions as to the nature of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in which bishops and monks vilify each other, and accuse the most distinguished disputants of every kind of crime, in-

cluding murder, treachery, and licentiousness. Councils varied in their action, sometimes condemning and sometimes defending the same men. This may seem a dark picture, and it is for each person to judge for himself if it is true. The records are copious, as some of the principal disputants narrated the events in which they took part, and there are several historians who made it their task to recount the transactions of the period. Among the infinite proposals that were produced one was that the Creed should contain only the words of Scripture. But this was always rejected. And so the doctrine of the Trinity was set out in language which had no place in Scripture. Thus the word Triad occurs for the first time in a work late on in the second century, but the word Trinity belongs to the end of the second century. The word "persons" is never used in Scripture, and substance is unknown to it. "God the Son and God the Holy Ghost" are innovations. "Eternally begotten," and "eternally proceeding," also are foreign to New Testament times. The word Trinity is first found in Tertullian, and in his writings occur the words *substantia* and *persona*, which play so important a part in the evolution of the dogma. The writers of the Confession of Faith have followed Tertullian in the use of these terms, and not the Greeks, who elaborated the doctrine. It may be therefore desirable to notice Tertullian's ideas on the subject.

Tertullian conceived that Deity was a substance having special attributes of its own, just like light, to which he continually compares it, or iron, or water. These substances never vary in quantity. The light is the same everywhere, possesses the same qualities, and produces the same effects. Thus the light appears in the sun, in the moon, in a candle, in the domestic fire, and if you light a candle from the domestic fire, you do not, in Tertullian's idea, diminish the light of the domestic fire, but simply extend the light. Thus there are portions of light everywhere, but there is only one substance that is light. So with Deity. That substance is always the same, possessing the same qualities of being infinite, eternal, almighty, and most wise. God is this entire substance, but Christ also possesses the same qualities, and is thus a portion of God. And the Holy Spirit is also a portion of God. The three, therefore, are the same substance and possess the same qualities, but they are distinct from each other. They never can be separated from each other, as they are the same substance, or portions of it, but they may be distinguished from each other, as Tertullian, quoting passages from Scripture, endeavours to prove. And the distinction can be expressed by the word "person."

Now this is the idea which is contained in the dogma of the Trinity as embodied in the Confession of Faith. It will strike any reflecting person that

it is difficult to believe this dogma. The questions will at once arise, Is there such a substance as Deity? Is there such a substance as light? Is there such a substance as iron? We know light and iron from their qualities, but beneath the qualities do there exist substrata on which these qualities repose?

First as to things called material. Here it may be noticed that Tertullian, following the Stoics, regarded Deity as material, or as being body. "Who," he says, "will deny that God is body (*deum corpus esse*), though God is Spirit?"[1] Modern philosophy has come to the conclusion that there is no need of such a conception as substance in regard to matter. It is sufficient to quote the opinion of Sir W. Hamilton:[2] "Substance and Quality are, manifestly, only thought as mutual *relatives*. We cannot think a quality existing absolutely, in or of itself. We are constrained to think it, as inhering in some basis, substratum, hypostasis, subject, or substance; but this substance cannot be conceived by us, except negatively, that is, as the unapparent—the inconceivable correlative of certain appearing qualities. If we attempt to think it positively, we can think it only by transforming it into a quality or bundle of qualities, which, again, we are compelled to refer to an unknown substance, now necessarily supposed for their incogitable basis. Everything, in fact, may be conceived as the quality, or as the substance

[1] *Adv. Praxean*, c. vii. [2] *Discussions on Philosophy*, p. 604.

of something else. But absolute substance and absolute quality, these are both inconceivable, as more than negations of the conceivable. It is hardly requisite to observe that the term Substance is vulgarly applied, in the abusive signification, to a congeries of qualities, denoting those especially which are more permanent, in contrast to those which are more transitory."

Mill discusses the subject in his *Logic*, vol. i. p. 64, with the same results. All recent writers on metaphysics come to the same conclusions. Mr. Taylor in his *Elements of Metaphysics* (1903),[1] says: "A still more serious difficulty remains behind. Not only is an 'unknowable substratum of qualities' a superfluous luxury in metaphysical theory, but the nature of the supposed relation between such a substratum and the attributes which 'flow' from it is unintelligible. We can understand neither what a substance or substratum totally devoid of qualities could possibly be, nor yet how the various qualities of the world of things presented to our experience could 'flow' as secondary consequences from one or more such substrata."

And again:[2] "This is the essence of the doctrine of Kant, according to which the concept of 'substance' is simply one form of the 'synthetic unity of apperception,' *i.e.* the process by which we project the unity of our own acts of attention into their objects,

[1] p. 132. [2] p. 134.

and thus create an orderly world for our own thought out of sensations which, as they are given to us, are a chaos. In principle, Kant's doctrine, though intended as a refutation of Hume's Associationism, only differs from Hume's in the stress it rightly lays on the element of subjective interest in perception; the two theories agree on the main point, that the bond which unites the many qualities of sense perception into one thing is a subjective one—in Hume's expressive phrase, a 'fiction of the mind.'"

Tertullian's idea of substance is unquestionably based on what he conceived to be the nature of matter, though it must be remembered that he conceived Spirit to be material, and the substance Deity visible to God alone. Tertullian evidently drew his arguments for the Trinity from material nature. "For," he says, "God (*protulit*) put forth the Word (*Sermonem*),[1] even as also the Paraclete teaches, as the root puts forth the shrub and the fountain the river and the sun the ray. For those forms are (puttings-forth) προβολαί of those substances out of which they come." And a few sentences after this he says: "For the root and the shrub are two things, but united; and the fountain and the river are two appearances (species), but inseparable, and the sun and the ray are two forms, but cohering." So he argues, the Father and the Son are two, but indivisible, but the Father is first in order, the Son second. And

[1] *Adv. Prax.*, c. viii.

the Spirit comes third, just as the fruit from the bush is third from the root, and the stream (*rivus*) from the river third from the fountain, and the apex (or end or top) from the ray third from the sun. But there is no difference made from the original source (*matrice*) from which they all derive their qualities (*proprietates*)." After Tertullian's time the material element was disowned by the orthodox. But it does not seem to me that they were able really to eliminate it except in mere words. The Greek term on which orthodoxy hang, ὁμοούσιος, does not appear to be more apprehensible than consubstantiality. It denotes that two beings co-exist, or have their existence inseparably combined. How can one conceive such a position? If it is predicated of two beings that they exist, then two beings exist and not one. There is no room in the assertion for uniting the two existences into one existence. The other Greek word, ὑπόστασις, is simply the Greek form of substantia. And so it was that British theologians adopted the word substance and put it into the Westminister Confession and the Creeds of the English Church. The difficulty is not removed, but increased, by the use of the word "person." A person is an individual, something that stands by itself and cannot be divided. How, then, can two persons or individuals be only one existence? This seems to be incomprehensible. And the theologians who formed the creeds and confessions came to a conclusion some-

what of this kind, for they allowed that none of the terms used in the creeds and confessions is exact, but that they are all mere adumbrations of an unknown reality which it is beyond the power of man to express in words. The difficulty also arises in regard to the other terms used in the Confession. How is it possible to conceive a divine person infinite, almighty, and omniscient as being eternally begotten from another divine person almighty and omniscient, or a divine person infinite, almighty, and omniscient eternally proceeding or going forth from two other infinite, almighty, and omniscient divine beings?

The nearest solution of the problem comes from the Hegelians. They believe that they can comprehend God as Absolute Mind and Absolute Reality. Mr. Haldane[1] quotes from Hegel these words: "That Man knows God implies, in accordance with the essential idea of communion or fellowship, that there is a community of knowledge; that is to say, Man knows God only in so far as God Himself knows Himself in Man. This knowledge is God's self-consciousness, but it is at the same time a knowledge of God on the part of Man, and the knowledge of God by Man is a knowledge of Man by God. The Spirit of Man, whereby he knows God, is simply the Spirit of God Himself."

Every thought and thing in the universe are evolutions of the Divine mind, and man comprehends God because, as we might express it in more

[1] *The Pathway to Reality*, vol. i. p. 168.

common language, there is nothing in the universe but Mind, and man's mind is a part or exhibition of God's mind. The Hegelians have no difficulty in explaining the Trinity. Mr. Haldane[1] presents the explanation thus: "You have in the New Testament the recognition of the three moments on which metaphysics lays such stress. You have, first of all, that which in philosophy would be the aspect which belongs to what Hegel calls 'Logic'—I mean the aspect which represents Mind taken in itself and apart from its consciousness of itself in another. Mind in itself may be said to represent what in theological language is described as the Father. In the element of the Son you have mind gone into otherness, hetereity, finite mind, the nature of which is conditioned by the externality which, as we saw, is only for and through the finite mind—God, in other words, imposing on Himself the limits of man's finitude, and so only, in this fashion alone, coming into direct relation with nature, with evil, and with death. Then there is the third moment in the movement, the return of the Absolute Mind into itself in the fulness of its self-consciousness, the Holy Spirit, the aspect in the Trinity which is in reality the logical *prius* of the two other aspects, aspects which are inseparable only in abstraction."

This solution of the mystery does not help us in believing the Creeds. "The Creeds have always spoken in pictorial language," but pictorial language

[1] *The Pathway to Reality*, vol. i. p. 162.

leads to constant strife. "As it is stated in the Creeds, the doctrine of the Trinity is essentially a doctrine which can be adequately expressed only in metaphysical language." None, therefore, but a metaphysician need attempt it. Probably none but a Hegelian thinks that he can apprehend what Absolute Mind or Absolute Reality is, or can explain what is meant by Absolute, or what is meant by Mind, or what is meant by Reality.

If this account of the Articles of the Confession of Faith on the Trinity is correct, then they are unintelligible, and if this be the case no one can believe them, and at the most all must doubt whether they can believe them. The circumstances in which the Nicene Creed was framed show how this peculiarity of the dogma arose. The Orthodox were resolved to adopt terms which would exclude Arians from agreeing to the Creed. They were anxious specially to gain this object. They affirmed that Arius maintained that Christ was a creature, made out of things non-existent. Language must be used which would be a flat contradiction. The idea of begetting suggested itself principally from the term in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, μονογενής, "only begotten," but they inserted into this interpretation of the verse the words "by nature" (φύσει).[1] Then when they found that it was proposed to call the son "true God," the Eusebian Arians nodded to each other that

[1] Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.*, i. 8, p. 29, quoting from Athanasius.

there was no objection to this, whereupon the Orthodox, basing their action on the words "the brightness," "the fountain and river," and "express image," and referring them to substance and also on the passage "I and the Father are one," wrote the "Son of the identical οὐσια ὁμοούσιος," that is, "of the identical substance, existence, or essence with the Father." Hence the word begotten was introduced, though this word was not new, as it is continually used by Tertullian and defended by numerous passages from Scripture. Most of these passages are taken from the Old Testament, and their reference to Christ is extremely doubtful. One of them in Proverbs viii. 22, perplexed the Orthodox much. The words in the Septuagint run, "The Lord created me the beginning of his ways to his works." All agreed that this referred to Christ. Another passage most frequently quoted is Psalm ii. 7, "The Lord said, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." This is regarded as referring to the Messiah, and a portion of the earliest Christians took the saying as being fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus when God, they thought, recognised him as the Messiah, and Jesus first conceived the idea of his Messianic mission. Hence so many historians of Jesus are inclined to think that not only the second and fourth Gospels, but also the first and third, began with the narrative of the baptism of Jesus. But whatever the words mean, they can have no reference to the

nature of Christ's existence. And it is not likely that the Scripture writers would have used γεννάω for this purpose, as it is a word dealing originally with a purely sexual matter, and might be appropriately employed as an expression of the adoption of a son, but cannot be applied to express with any appropriateness the mode by which a divine being came into existence, especially when what the Orthodox desired to express was that he never came into existence, but existed from eternity.

The word "person" presents similar difficulties, but there is nothing in the Scriptures to explain it. And it is often impossible to find out what definite meaning the Orthodox attached to it. The sense in which Tertullian takes the word is open to doubt. A recent writer has made a thorough investigation into the meaning of homoousios and other terms used in the Nicene and other Creeds, and in the discussion of these begins his exposition by the remark: "In regard to the Latin word *persona*, the most important fact to notice is that, during the period with which we have to deal, it practically never means what 'person' means in modern popular usage."[1] But of course it is the popular usage according to which most, if not all, understand the word in the Confession of Faith and the Creeds. Mr. Baker says further: "But in general the word is used by Tertullian to designate status or character or part or

[1] *Texts and Studies*, vol. vii., No. 1, by J. F. Bethune-Baker, p. 70.

function." But if it is function, this comes very nearly to saying that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit represent but three functions of the One God, so that the Trinity is a trinity of Functions and mere modes of looking at God's activity, not a real Trinity at all.

The difficulties become enormous when an attempt is made, as the Confession does, to define the exact relations which existed between the divine and human natures in Christ. First it is said that he was "conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance." Probably substance means here what it means in the section on the Trinity. As there is a substance deity, so there is a substance humanity. Mary was a portion of humanity, and therefore her son was also. But writers, as far as I know, do not carry out the idea. If humanity, like deity, is a substance, then there can only be one man and millions of persons in that man. And it will be more easily allowed that the humanity substance is a fiction.

It is possible that substance may mean in the Confession the material composition of man, "conceived," that is, of the body of Mary. But here again there is no substratum. The body of man has nothing permanent in it, but, on the contrary, its composition is in continual flux, since all parts of the body grow and decay and pass away entirely from a continuous organic existence.

The birth from a virgin also presents difficulties. This part of the dogma depends upon the preliminary chapters in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and on incorrect interpretations of passages in the Old Testament, which certainly referred to other persons than Mary, and other times than those of Christ. If the dogma were correct, it would raise strange suspicions in regard to the character of Joseph and Mary. If we are to trust the accounts of the evangelists, the people believed that Jesus was the son of Joseph (Luke iv. 22), and said: "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" (John vi. 42), and Philip expressly describes him as "the son of Joseph who is from Nazareth." Did Mary lend herself to the deception that he was the son of Joseph, and conceal his miraculous birth — an event which would have attracted great attention as a remarkable prodigy?

Then how could the exclamations which the people uttered in regard to Christ arise, if Mary had said anything about the miraculous birth mentioned in the preliminary chapters of the two Gospels? "Is not this the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not his sisters all with us?" (Matt. xiii. 55, 56; Mark vi. 2, 3). The evangelists also mention his brothers and sisters in other passages—Mark iii. 32–35, Matt. xii. 46–50, Luke viii. 19–21, John ii.

12, vii. 3, 5, 10; Acts i. 14. Without any modifying statement in these verses, the inevitable belief of an ordinary reader would be that the brothers and sisters were the children of Joseph and Mary, and the ingenious attempts to explain them otherwise are plainly the product of dogmatic prepossessions. Mary could not therefore be believed to be a virgin if she had a considerable family. If, further, theologians maintain that she was a virgin both when she conceived and when she bore Christ, they must adopt the statements invented by the makers of the apocryphal histories of Christ and of Mary, that the fœtus "*clauso utero intravit et exivit de virgine.*" The narrator adds, in order to explain how Christ entered and came out of the womb, "*qui januis clausis ad discipulos intravit,*" that, in other words, the body of the fœtus was supernatural, and passed, like Christ's resurrection body, through all material obstacles. The scepticism of Salome, as represented in the *Protevangelium Jacobi*, c., xix., would also be justified: ἐὰν μὴ βαλῶ τὸν δάκτυλόν μου καὶ ἐρευνήσω τὴν φύσιν αὐτῆς, οὐ μη πιστεύσω ὅτι παρθένος ἐγέννησεν.[1] Nothing seems to be gained by such a belief, but, on the contrary, it increases the difficulties of the case. If the conception and birth of Christ were supernatural, then there may well be doubts whether He was a real man. Christ would be the only man of whom it could be said that he was created.

[1] *Transitus Mariæ, Apocalypses Apocryphæ*, ed. Tischendorf, p. 122.

According to Genesis, Adam was made out of clay and breath, or Spirit. Eve was made out of a rib. All other human beings have been begotten. Christ alone, of all intelligent beings, according to the virgin theory, was created out of nothing, though we must add that philosophers like Sir William Hamilton regard the notion of creation out of nothing as unthinkable.[1] Surely the discussion of this part of the Confession is somewhat of the nature of a petty detail, and it is of no consequence whether a man believes it or not. But the other questions that arise have been deemed of supreme importance. What was the relation of the divine nature to the human nature in Christ? Did the divine reason think in Christ, or had he reason also as a man? Did the Divine will resolve in Christ, or had he, as a man, a will of his own? Were the acts attributed to him in the Gospels accommodations to the weakness of his fellow men? Could he have cured everybody in the world? And, if he could, why did he not do this? What were the limitations that human nature imposed on his divine nature? It is easy to see that infinite materials for discussion arise out of the dogma. And, in fact, for centuries controversies raged about the dogma, and heresy after heresy broke out. If anyone attempts to read the five volumes of the English translation of Dorner's *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, he must be a man of

[1] *Essays*, p. 620.

extraordinarily strong brain if he does not feel utterly bewildered by the various ideas that have sprung up in the human mind in regard to the person of Christ. The heresies which Dorner explains are exceedingly numerous and perplexing, and it is doubtful if anyone could without book state what is meant by Patripassianism, Arianism, Semi-Arianism, Homoiousianism, Anomoiousianism, Meletianism, Eutychianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Monotheletism, Monophysitism, Adoptianism, Docetism, Nihilianism, and a number of other isms. And yet if one cannot explain these isms, he is almost certain to fall into one or other of them without knowing it, if he attempts to think out the problem of the union of the Divine and the human nature in Christ. How can ordinary persons, with no capacity for metaphysics, master such a subject and have sure beliefs in regard to it?

And one sees how the only way to settle such a matter is the way that was taken to effect this in the fourth century. An autocratic emperor, Theodosius, issued a decree that all who did not believe as his decree ordered them to believe should be declared heterodox and should be punished. And to this day those alone are reckoned orthodox by large bodies of Christians who obey the decree of Theodosius.

It seems to me that the orthodox theologians of the fourth century made a double mistake. First

they took it for granted that religion was a matter of the intellect, not of the heart. In ordinary life no one makes this mistake. We do not inquire into the metaphysical constitution of a man before we trust him or love him. We do not think it necessary to decide for ourselves whether a man is composed of body, soul, and spirit, or of body and soul only, or of body only, before we trust and love him. We do not stipulate in regard to feelings and actions that we must not feel and act towards a man until we have come to absolutely clear opinions in regard to the relation between soul and body. And so throughout the Old and New Testaments God and Christ are to be loved because they are entitled to our love. They draw out our affections. No metaphysical explanation is given of their natures.

The second mistake the men of the fourth century made was to introduce a notion of the word "God" which made the distance between God and man infinite and impassable. It was quite different in antiquity and in the Scriptures. According to Homeric and later ideas the race of gods and men was one race. Gods and men were kindred to each other, and in later times men might be raised to the godhead. The gods whom Cicero[1] and Horace[2] seem to love best are the gods like Bacchus, Æsculapius, Castor and Pollux, Hercules and Quirinus,

[1] *Tusculan. Disput.*, lib. i. 12–17; *De Legibus*, lib. ii. 8–19.
[2] *Od.* iii. 3–9.

who raised themselves to divinity by the benefits they conferred on mankind. The same notion of the godhead appears in the Old and New Testaments. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"[1] The words which offended the Jews on this occasion were, "I and my Father are one (ἕν),"[2] where Christ evidently means, "I and my Father are united in the closest relationship of activity and feeling." Afterwards he uses the same expression to indicate the unity of himself and his disciples. "Holy Father, keep them in thy name in which thou hast given them to me that they may be one (ἕν) even as we."[3] "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also who believe on me through their word; that they all may be one (ἕν); even as thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us."[4] "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them, that they may be one (ἕν) even as we are one (ἕν); I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one (ἕν)."[5] In Peter i. 4 it is said that Christians have received precious

[1] John x. 34.
[2] John x. 30.
[3] John xvii. 11.
[4] John xvii. 20, 21.
[5] John xvii. 22, 23.

promises "in order that through these ye may become partakers of a divine nature." Justin Martyr points out the state of the case exactly. The Supreme God is the nameless God. "For," he says, "no one can give a name to the indescribable God; and if anyone would dare to say that there is a name, he is utterly mad."[1] Accordingly God has no name: the words Father, God, Creator, Lord, and Ruler are not proper names, but appellations given in consequence of good deeds and functions. In other Christian writers of the second century men are called gods (θεοί),[2] and Clemens Alexandrinus stated that the aim of Christianity was to make men Gods.[3]

The same close connexion between God and man is involved in the doctrine of the Logos. Christ is the incarnation of the Logos or the Reason of God which has come to expression or to consciousness, as the Hegelians would say. The Logos existed as an activity of God from before all time. And he showed himself forth bodily in Christ. But whatever man, Jew or pagan, had a spark of reason in him, he got that spark from the Reason of God, that is, from Christ. Thus Christianity really existed from the first dawn of creation more or less in all men,

[1] *Apol.* i. *c.* lxvi. p. 94*d*.

[2] *Apol.* ii. *c.* vi. p. 44*d*.

[3] The principal passages are enumerated in Mayor's note, p. 203, in Hort's and in his edition of the Seventh Book of Clement's *Miscellanies*, and reference is made to other discussions of the subject.

and the final aim of Christianity is to make all men reasonable or Christlike in a perfect degree.

The doctrine of the Trinity thus made prominent a new and purely metaphysical aspect of the Divine Being. It is not for man to impose these metaphysical speculations on his fellow men as absolute truth, or even as ascertained truth. Where there is a revelation the amount of belief required can only be the exact amount of opinion explicitly declared in the words of the revelation. The Scotch divines have generally acknowledged this. It is perfectly legitimate to speculate on the nature of God and Christ, but it is essential to stamp these discussions as speculations, and as poor endeavours of weak man to comprehend subjects which are probably beyond his powers.

Dr. Chalmers, who was orthodox on the dogma, says in his *Lectures in Divinity* (p. 226): "It is truly instructive to observe that the only verse which was conceived to give a Scriptural expression of what I have called the complex or comprehensive proposition, is given up, and, I believe, warrantably and rightly given up, by the great majority of critics. All Scripture is profitable; and if the separate propositions are clearly expressed there, but not the general one, what is this to say but that the main edification and practical benefit of the doctrine lay in its elementary truths, and not in the generalised article which the controversalists have drawn out of

it? We dispute not the soundness of their deduction, we dispute not the necessity of a generalised expression in opposition to heretics who set themselves in opposition even to the separate and elementary truths; but when we find that these truths, instead of being exhibited in conjunction in the Bible, are brought forward in almost every instance individually and by themselves, what is this but to say that the great moral and practical influence of this revelation lies in our being made to know that the Son, our Saviour, is God, and that the Spirit, our Sanctifier, is God? It is delightful to understand that in preaching we have not to perplex ourselves with the adjustments of the schoolmen, which, though they did achieve the service of lifting up a safeguard against the influence of heresy, did not at the same time change the essential quality of Scriptural truth, or the power of that truth when Scripturally enforced on the consciences of men. I cannot too earnestly or repeatedly insist upon it, that your business in the pulpit is to be expounders of the Scriptural and not expounders of the scholastic theology. It is indeed remarkable that there is no explicit assertion of the union between the persons in the Godhead in the Bible, however fairly, and indeed, irresistibly, that union is deducible from the separate propositions which enter into the doctrine of the Trinity. Still, we never find it brought forward in this general form for any moral or prac-

tical purpose, as our Saviour's divinity is, for example to enforce the virtue of condescension and humility. Indeed, whether any moral was expressly founded or not on the separate proposition of Christ being God and the Spirit being God, the relations in which they respectively stand to us, the offices which they discharge in our behalf, give the highest practical consequence to the information that each of them is divine. I should like if, as the result of our earnest and oft-recurring observations on this topic, you learned to disengage the scholastic from the Scriptural when enforcing from the pulpit any of the doctrines which are related to the Trinity; and I should further rejoice if, in virtue of the frequency wherewith we have applied it, it were impressed on you as a general principle that might be carried over the whole extent of doctrinal theology."

"CHAPTER IV.—*Of Creation.*

"*Sec.* 1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good."

Here there can be no doubt that the writer of Genesis and the framers of the Confession of Faith meant six ordinary days, with the evening and the morning constituting a day. The attempt to square

Genesis with science by making the days epochs is contrary to all the rules of exegesis, and probably no one supposes that the writer of Genesis or the framers of the Confession had any idea of epochs. Unquestionably some of the writers of antiquity, as Philo, might imagine such an interpretation possible, for their rules of exegesis allowed a very wide liberty, but the framers of the Confession particularly hit at such licence by the words in chapter ii, section 9, "and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one)."

The persons who sign the Confession must hold that the discoveries of the science of geology as to the mode of the development of animal life are entirely wrong. They must be out-and-out opponents of evolution. They must also assume that the narratives of Genesis are literally accurate, that there was a tree of life, and that the serpent tempted Eve. Genesis also enables us to form an idea of the length of time during which the writer believed the world to have existed, for it gives the number of years which elapsed from Adam's creation, which took place on the sixth day of creation, till some events whose dates can be ascertained historically. There is uncertainty about the exact numbers, for the Septuagint differs considerably from the Hebrew. But the numbers in Genesis, whatever form of the text is adopted, would compel us to

believe that the world was created at the utmost six or seven thousand years ago, and he who believes the Confession of Faith must believe that geology is entirely wrong in this matter, and the Egyptian and Babylonian records are not to be trusted. All research in geology and remote antiquity must be strictly forbidden by a Church who holds to this Confession.

"CHAPTER III.—*Of God's Eternal Decree.*

"*Sec.* 3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

"*Sec.* 4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

"*Sec.* 5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith and good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace."

"*Sec.* 6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being

fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

"*Sec.* 7. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

"CHAPTER V.—*Of Providence.*

"*Sec.* 6. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan: whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves even under those means which God useth for the softening of others."

"CHAPTER X.—*Of Effectual Calling.*

"*Sec* 1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by

Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."

"*Sec.* 3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."

"*Sec.* 4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested."

"CHAPTER XI.—*Of Justification.*

"*Sec.* 4. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them."

"CHAPTER XVI.—*Of Good Works.*

"*Sec.* 7. Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things

which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God."

"CHAPTER XVII.—*Of the Perseverance of the Saints.*

"*Sec.* 1. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."

"*Sec.* 2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof."

The remarkable feature about all these passages is the extraordinary idea that is presented of the character of God. According to them, God for his own glory condemns millions of millions of his own creatures to everlasting suffering. Probably in the times of the framers of the Confession, no one had any idea of the vast numbers who were condemned by their doctrines to eternal perdition.

It will be noticed that none can be saved except those who believe in Christ. A difficulty arises with elect infants, idiots, deaf and dumb, and others by nature incapable of hearing or comprehending the gospel of Jesus, or, in the words of the Confession, "of being outwardly called by the word of the ministry"; and this difficulty is solved in chapter x., section 3. But all the rest of mankind who have not believed in Christ must perish for ever, and special emphasis is put on this in chapter x., section 4, for it is declared to be certain that no one, however good he may be, can be saved unless he professes the Christian religion, and of those professing the Christian religion only those that truly come to Christ. The number of the inhabitants of the world at present is estimated at 1,479,729,000. How many of these are there of whom it can be said that they truly come to Christ? There are upwards of a thousand millions who are men "not professing the Christian religion," and of the 395,000,000 professing the Christian religion, how many of them have truly come to Christ in the opinion of the orthodox people of this country?

"CHAPTER VI.—*Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.*

"*Sec.* 1. Our first parents being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased,

according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory."

"*Sec.* 2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body."

"*Sec.* 3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation."

"*Sec.* 4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."

"*Sec.* 6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

"CHAPTER XV.—*Of Repentance unto Life.*

"*Sec.* 4. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent."

It is difficult for any man who believes these statements to take part in any transactions with his fellow-men, public and private. For either he must suppose that he is one of the elect or that he is not. If he is one of the elect, his inability to do good has been or will be removed. But the other members of the family or society or company or committee

to which he belongs must be nearly all, in the present state of religion according to his conception of it, utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil. Do not these words, for instance, apply with full force to the majority, if not to all, in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons, and are not most Churches throughout the world largely synagogues of Satan in the eyes of those who deem themselves the elect?

"CHAPTER XX.—*Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.*

"*Sec.* 2. God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also."

"*Sec.* 4. And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godli-

ness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate."

"CHAPTER XXIII.—*Of the Civil Magistrate.*

"*Sec.* 3. The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."

Here we have a statement of the duties and powers of the civil magistrate. He is bound to suppress publications contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity. A very wide range is thus given him, and those who believe the Confession of Faith must deem it right that every inquiry which is in the opinion of the magistrate not favourable to Christianity should be treated as a crime and accordingly punished. Section 3 of

chapter xxiii. is still wider. He has power to suppress heresies, innovations in worship, all attempts at ritualism, and a host of other thoughts and practices, and he can punish Sabbath breaking and disobedience to the other injunctions of the Mosaic Law.

There were unquestionably Christians at the time when the Confession of Faith was framed who deemed that magistrates ought not to have such powers. Some of them had suffered severely from the exercise of these powers, and mankind has learned toleration slowly and principally through suffering. But the great majority were not inclined to view the matter in this light. Their turn had come. The ordinance of Parliament which authorised the existence of the Assembly contains these words: "Whereas it hath been declared and resolved by the lords and commons assembled in parliament, that the present church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers depending upon the hierarchy, is evil, and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom; a great impediment to reformation and growth of religion; and very prejudicial to the state and government of this kingdom; and that therefore they are resolved that the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the church as may be most agreeable to God's holy

word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other reformed churches abroad; and for the better effecting thereof, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions, it is thought fit and necessary to call an assembly of learned, godly, and judicious divines, to consult and advise of such matters and things, touching the premises, as shall be proposed unto them by both or either of the houses of parliament."

The Prelatists had treated Nonconformists harshly, and now power was given to Independent and Presbyterian magistrates to drive Prelatists from their benefices, and to imprison them or send them into exile. It is one of the strange ironies of history that this should be the clause in consequence of which a body of judges, probably not one of them Independent or Presbyterian, and some of them most probably Prelatic and Ritualist, in spite of the treaty of union should deprive one Presbyterian Church of large funds because it united with another Presbyterian Church.

The clause in the Confession says nothing of the endowment or establishment of churches. There was a very good reason for this. An individual of lofty thought and wide toleration like Milton might think that the Church would be better without endowments from the State, but such

persons were exceedingly few and had no influence. It may be affirmed that all sections of religionists had no objection to receive endowments from the State, and therefore there was no need of saying anything about the matter. It is disputed points that make their appearance in a creed. This had really never been disputed. Ambrose, in his letter to the Emperor Valentinian in reply to that of Symmachus, adduces arguments in favour of voluntaryism such as might be used by the keenest voluntary of the present time. He sees no objection to the State confiscating the revenues of the Vestal Virgins and of the priests, and points to the fact that Christianity had made marvellous progress without the aid of princes, and even in the midst of persecutions by the State, while paganism had decayed, though it had the support of emperors and was dowered with magnificent bequests and donations of lands. But when the Christians were offered these possessions of the pagan priests, they did not refuse them. And so it went on through the centuries down to the times of the Westminster Confession. No doubt the State deprived pagan priests of their endowments and gave them to Culdees and Roman Catholics. The State deprived the Roman Catholics of their endowments and conferred them on Presbyterians in Scotland and Episcopalians in England. At the period of the Assembly the State resolved to deprive all Prelatists

of the endowments, and they did hand over benefices and lectureships in the Universities to Independents and Presbyterians. It was the State which summoned the Westminster Assembly. It was the State that paid the officials of the Assembly. The Assembly might, indeed, be called a Committee of Parliament. And thus Independents and Presbyterians were acknowledging in the most substantial way the right of Parliament to deal with the emoluments of churches. It could not be expected that the Assembly would take up this question of establishment and endowment. They thought that the less said about it the better. Milton denounced the Assembly in strong language. "But while," he says, "they taught compulsion without convincement, which not long before they complained of as executed unchristianly against themselves, their intents are clear to have been no better than antichristian, setting up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power, to advancing of their own authority above the magistrate, whom they would have made their executioner, to punish church delinquencies, whereof civil laws have no cognizance."[1] The separation of Church and State has almost invariably been treated at first as a matter of expediency, and is still held by many as such, not as religious doctrine. The majority Free Church and some of the foremost United Presbyterians saw no inconsistency with

[1] *History of Britain*, Book III., introductory portion.

their opinions in having religious education supported by State aid and by rates, and probably they do so still. It is only comparatively lately that the religious element has been introduced. It partly arose from the principle adopted by many that the State ought to endow truth only, and that they alone held the truth and alone ought to be endowed, as is fully set forth in Mr. Gladstone's book on the Church; and partly also by such expositions of the Kingdom of Christ as Archbishop Whately made in his Essay on that subject[1]—from which the inference was drawn that establishment and endowment were either not warranted by Scripture or were even contrary to the spirit of the New Testament.

The recognition of religion by the State is a different question. Whether the State should take upon it to proclaim a fast, or to employ priests or ministers on ceremonial occasions, or make regulations in regard to Sunday, not as a day of rest, but as a day of worship—these are questions which are still undecided. But all these questions of voluntaryism, such as the bestowal of endowments at one time belonging to Roman Catholic and other Churches on the present Church of England and the present Church of Scotland, are really modern. The Westminster Assembly did not and could not take them up. They believed that Presbyterians

[1] London, 1841.

and Independents were entitled to get and take the religious endowments, but they thought it unnecessary to say anything about the matter in a Confession or Creed.

"CHAPTER XXI.—*Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day.*

"*Sec.* 7. As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath."

"*Sec.* 8. This sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the publick and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy."

It is doubtful whether many who are amongst the most devout and holy of the worshippers of the present day could agree to this statement about the Sabbath, and theological scholars might well dispute the accuracy of the historical statements.

POPERY

"CHAPTER XXII.—*Of lawful Oaths and Vows.*

"*Sec.* 7. No man may vow to do any thing forbidden in the word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise or ability from God. In which respects, Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself."

"CHAPTER XXV.—*Of the Church.*

"*Sec.* 6. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God."

"CHAPTER XXIX.—*Of the Lord's Supper.*

"*Sec.* 2. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect."

Few men in the present day who have received any culture could honestly sign section 6 of chapter xxv.

Very many will feel unable to identify the Pope of Rome with antichrist.

"CHAPTER XXXII.—*Of the State of Men after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead.*

"*Sec.* 1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, (which neither die nor sleep,) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the scripture acknowledgeth none."

"*Sec.* 2. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever."

"*Sec.* 3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body."

"CHAPTER XXXIII.—*Of the Last Judgment.*

"*Sec.* 2. The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the

Lord ; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

These sections deal with the future state. They are crammed with assertions, about which Christians of the present day would not agree. The division of man into soul and body, the separate existence of the soul and the locality assigned to it after death, the supposition that God dwells in the highest heavens or that there is such a place as the highest heavens, imply propositions which have been all keenly disputed, and that the selfsame bodies will rise is regarded by many as an absurd assertion, as no body is ever the same, but undergoes continual change.

But the awfully solemn question of future punishments is one on which most people would be unwilling to dogmatise. And the words of Scripture render definite conclusions impossible. The revelation to the Hebrews makes death the end of all things, with no return to life through resurrection or otherwise, and the popular imagination represented both body and soul together as one personality going to a place called Sheol, where good and bad alike have together a shadowy existence. In the New Testament arguments can be found for the belief that the wicked will be utterly destroyed, that the good with their bodies are sleeping till the resurrection,

and that all mankind will yet one day be restored to harmony with the Divine Being, and enjoy eternal felicity. There are other opinions also which can find some support in Scripture. If it is possible to entertain the Jewish belief, or the Pauline doctrine in 1 Corinthians xv. 20–28, it would be better to hold one or the other, and to leave the other doctrine of eternal future punishments for the non-elect completely in the background and never mention it. But who can sign the Confession of Faith, with its awful future and the ideas of the Divine Being which it suggests, as the Confession of "*his faith*"?

CHAPTER II

THE ENGLISH CHURCH
THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

THESE articles are much more vague, and perhaps more easy to sign, than the dogmas of the Confession of Faith, but they contain at bottom nearly all the difficulties which the person who signs the Confession of Faith has to face.

Article VIII. is entitled "Of the Three Creeds." It is as follows :—

"The Three Creeds, *Nicene* Creed, *Athanasius's* Creed, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles'* Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture."

Dr. Gibson[1] remarks in regard to these three Creeds: "As the Apostles' Creed was not composed by the apostles, and the Nicene Creed is not the Creed of Nicæa, so the Athanasian Creed is not the work of Athanasius."

The first Creed is as follows:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

"And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified,

[1] *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, vol. i., p. 329.

dead, and buried, He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen."

The only points in this Creed that could raise doubt in the mind of a Christian are:

1. The word Virgin as an epithet of Mary, which raises the whole question of the miraculous birth of Jesus.

2. The statement that he descended into hell. Hell (*Inferna*) here means the place where the dead are, the Sheol of the Hebrews, but it is doubtful whether most of the New Testament writers acknowledged any such place, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether any such place exists in the regions below the surface of the earth, as the terms Sheol, *Infernum*, and *Inferi* imply.

3. The term Catholick is apt to awaken associations which belong to a one-sided ecclesiastical system foreign to early Christianity. If "Universal" was used instead, the true meaning of the word would be given; or if "holy" were substituted in its place, no one could object. The word holy, and not Catholic, was in the early form of the Creed.

There can scarcely be a doubt that *descendit ad*

infernum, *inferna*, or *inferos*, and *catholicam* did not form part of the original words of the Creed.

THE SECOND CREED—THE NICENE

The Creed is as follows, as it appears in the English Church Prayer Book :—

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made: Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man, And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

"And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one Catholick and Apostolick Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen."

The remarks made on the Doctrine of the Trinity as stated in the Confession of Faith are to some

extent applicable here. The terms which do not occur in Scripture, and to which no meaning can be now attached, are found here: begotten, substance; but no mention is made of person or Trinity. The facts of Revelation are given; the explanation is left unattempted.

THIRD CREED—THE ATHANASIAN CREED

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith.

"Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

"And the Catholick Faith is this, That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

"Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

"For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

"But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

"Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

"The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

"The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

"The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

"And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

"As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

"So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

"And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

"So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

"And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

"So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

"And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

"For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;

"So are we forbidden by the Catholick Religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

"The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten.

"The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten.

"The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

"So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

"And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another;

"But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

"So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

"He, therefore, that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

"Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"For the right Faith is that we believe and

confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

"God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world.

"Perfect God, and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

"Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood.

"Who although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ;

"One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God;

"One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

"For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;

"Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

"He ascended into heaven; he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works.

"And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

"This is the Catholick Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

"As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen."

The peculiarity of this creed is that it descends to the minutest affirmations and negations, and that

the person who uses it pronounces the opinion that whoever does not believe the doctrine propounded in the creed "without doubt shall perish everlastingly." If it be the case, as seems likely, that parts of it are absolutely unintelligible, and therefore cannot be believed by anyone, then eternal destruction is pronounced on the whole creation. It contains nearly every word which metaphysical speculation has discarded: *persons*, *substance*, *begotten*, *proceeding*, and a statement of the belief that all who have done evil shall go into "*everlasting fire*." Various attempts are now being made to mitigate the harshness of this creed. It is said, for instance, that it is not a correct translation. But the person who utters before the Omniscient this creed, or hymn, as some curiously think it to be, stands by the words which he utters, and by nothing else. If the translation is wrong, why is it not altered at once? Why go before God with an incorrect translation? Besides, in a creed it is of no consequence whether it is the original or a translation; what is wanted is that it should be an exact presentation of the thoughts and beliefs of the speaker. And if a creed says anything which it ought not to say, surely the error should be removed at once, and the speaker speak what he really means. The Athanasian Creed is believed by most to have been composed by a Gallican priest. Is this priest to be reckoned of higher authority than the

English Church and all its Archbishops and Bishops? Cannot the English Church make its own creed, unhampered by the Gallican priest of the Middle Ages?

Then the alterations which it is proposed to make in the translation do not seem to me to remove any difficulty. The most prominent alteration is in the rendering of the first four words: "*quicumque vult salvus esse*," which we are told should be translated: "Whosoever wishes to be spiritually healthy, here and now."[1] 'It is making no statement of the future so far at all.' But what help is got from this when the next clause is: "which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," and when the forty-second clause says: "This is the Catholick Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved"; or, as the apologists would translate the Latin words, "he will not be able to be spiritually healthy"? A kind of satisfaction is also found in the supposition based upon the word *servaverit*, "shall have kept," for the everlasting punishment then refers only to those who are within the Church. If the clause were fully extended according to this idea, it would be: "If any member of the Church of England does not believe out and out every

[1] *The Athanasian Creed*, by the Right Rev. A. F. Ingram, D.D., Bishop of London. The same subject is treated by the Rev. E. Hobson and by the Rev. J. Rawdon.

doctrine laid down in the creed to the end of his days, or lapses into Arianism or the other heresies connected with the subject, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly: but if he belongs to no church, or to another church which has never accepted the creed, he need have no fear, or at the most we cannot say what will become of him."

The apologies do not seem to me to remove the difficulties. But it appears to me that the apologies are lame, and that the translation of the Prayer Book is better than that of the apologists. The Latin is mediæval and ecclesiastical Latin, and if the apologists had turned to any Latin dictionary they would have found words to this effect under *salvus:* "*In eccl.*, Latin, saved from sin, saved by Christ," with references to the Vulgate. One of these references is to Acts xvi. 31: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "*Et salvus eris et domus tua*," in the Vulgate, and σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου in the Greek text. There is something approaching absolute certainty that this would be the sense to which the Gallican priest would be accustomed, and which he would give to the word *salvus*. In regard to the emphasis laid on *servaverit*, "keep," as indicating that the person must have first got it before he could keep it, it seems equally clear that the priest had no thought of the outside world. To him it would be absolutely certain that every person who was outside the Church must perish for

ever. Salvation, in his opinion, was to be found only within the Roman Catholic Church.

The creed, then, or hymn, teaches as plainly as words can teach that a man must believe the doctrine of the Trinity as set forth in it, without deviations and without any heretical error. To believe, he must understand it; and if, therefore, he does not understand it, he will perish for ever.

Now we have seen that philosophic thinkers are all of opinion that the creed cannot be understood—that it is unintelligible. And anyone who has questioned ordinary people on the subject must have seen that they are completely bewildered by the statements of the creed, and if they are bold enough to express their own thoughts, they fall unconsciously into heretical opinions on every side. The metaphysical doctrine of the Trinity does not hold the same place in Scotch Churches as it does in the English. The consequence is that an exposition of it is not often made in sermons. I have heard such expositions only about four or five times, but on every occasion the minister, honestly endeavouring to bring the matter within the capacities of his congregation, has uttered unconsciously monstrous heresies. I have heard Docetism, Sabellianism, Monophysite, and Monothelite opinions laid before the audience as explanations of the phenomena recorded in the New Testament. And what are we to think of the outside world? Sitting beside Nubar Pasha

on one occasion, I discussed with him the religions of the East, and I put to him the question, "Do you think that the Mohammedans will become Christian?" "Never," he said; "the Easterns are not metaphysical. They are utterly bewildered when they hear of one in three and three in one, and turn away from such dogmas." What comfort can there be to English Church congregations when they pronounce before the Omniscient that a hundred and sixty millions of our fellow-beings are "without doubt to perish everlastingly," because they have no turn for metaphysics?

"ARTICLE VI.—*Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*"

It is as follows:—

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the names and number of the Canonical Books.

Genesis,	*Deuteronomy,*
Exodus,	*Joshua,*
Leviticus,	*Judges,*
Numbers,	*Ruth,*

The First Book of Samuel,
The Second Book of Samuel,

The First Book of Kings,
The Second Book of Kings,
The First Book of Chronicles,
The Second Book of Chronicles,
The First Book of Esdras,
The Second Book of Esdras,
The Book of Esther,
The Book of Job,
The Psalms,
The Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes or Preacher,
Cantica, or Songs of Solomon,
Four Prophets the greater,
Twelve Prophets the less.

"And the other Books (as *Hierome* saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras,
The Fourth Book of Esdras,
The Book of Tobias,
The Book of Judith,
The rest of the Book of Esther,
The Book of Wisdom,
Jesus the Son of Sirach,
Baruch the Prophet,
The Song of the Three Children,
The Story of Susannah,
Of Bel and the Dragon,
The Prayer of Manasses,
The First Book of Maccabees,
The Second Book of Maccabees.

"All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical."

This Article allows a wide latitude of opinion in regard to the Scriptures. It lays emphasis on things necessary for salvation as being the special message of the Scripture, and says nothing of the divine or human authorship, or of its infallibility in other matters not bearing on salvation. Its definition of Canonical books is also wide. They are described as being books of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. It then gives a list of the Canonical books of the Old Testament, but the list contains several books of whose authority there was considerable doubt in the early Church, and there is much doubt in the Church of the present day. It also excludes a number of books which were deemed Canonical in olden times by large numbers of Christians.

There is no enumeration of the books of the New Testament, but, practically, the man who assents to the Articles must regard the books of our ordinary New Testament as Canonical, some of which were rejected from the Canon by many Christians in early times, and are rejected by many Christians in the present day.

"ARTICLE VII.—*Of the Old Testament.*"

It is as follows:—

"The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God

and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises."

Investigations into the teaching of the Old Testament render this Article very doubtful. This will be shown by a summary of the doctrines of the Hebrews, which appeared in the *Athenæum* in a review of Professor Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament*:—

"Professor Davidson nowhere presents a general outline of the results of his investigations or exhibits as a whole what we may call the creed of the ancient Hebrews. It is worth while drawing attention to this.

"They believed that Jehovah was the One and only God of Israel, at first in opposition to the gods of other nations, but finally as the One and only true God. The conception of a Trinity was completely alien to the Hebrew mind. Some modern theologians have discovered traces of this dogma in the Old Testament, but the discovery is due to their own imagination. Jehovah ruled the world in every detail, rewarding the righteous with prosperity and punishing the wicked with adversity. There was thus complete justice in this life. 'Prosperity was the token of God's favour, and adversity of His displeasure.' 'With the man who doeth well, it is well; with the sinner it is ill.' 'God alone forgives sin and covers it.' 'The motives are drawn from His own nature and the initiative is His.' The law

indeed ordained a sacrifice as an atonement for sin, but 'the principle of atonement by the sacrifice must remain obscure.' The sacrifice was enjoined only for sins of inadvertency. 'There does not seem evidence that they awakened the wrath of God.' And therefore the sacrifice was neither expiatory nor vicarious. It seems 'of the nature of a gift to God.' When men died, they passed into utter forgetfulness. 'To the Israelite death was truly death; and the dead were cut off from fellowship with the living, whether man or God.' The popular imagination or feeling could not entertain the idea that the dead ceased to exist, and so it placed them in a region called Sheol, where they had a mere shadowy existence. 'All that belongs to life ceases except existence.' The good and the evil went to Sheol. There was no heaven and no hell for the Hebrew. Justice had been done to all during life, and there was no need for retribution of any kind. In the later periods of the Jewish history recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, when the idea of the individual held sway, some of the best men had hopes of some kind of a future life and of a great Messianic kingdom in which they would have a share, but even these never dreamt of a heaven as a place of bliss.

"'The place of Israel glorified and of God present is, of course, in all the Old Testament writers, the earth. God descends; His tabernacle is among men; men are not translated into heaven.'"

Many people would prefer the creed of the Hebrews to the creed often attributed to the New Testament. They would rather that there should be no heaven and no hell, than that thousands of millions of their fellow-men should be sent to everlasting fire. They would prefer also to believe that God has the power to forgive sins without any impulse from without, and that he requires no expiation to stimulate his mercy. The New Testament doctrines as expounded by many are not evolutions of the Hebrew creed, but additions and contradictions to it.

"ARTICLE IX.—*Of Original or Birth-sin.*

"Original Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk:) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam;* whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

"ARTICLE X.—*Of Free-Will.*

"The condition of Man after the fall of *Adam* is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

"ARTICLE XIII.—*Of Works before Justification.*

"Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

The doctrine in these Articles is not expressed so definitely and in such detail as in the Confession of Faith, but it is practically the same. All men are by their connexion with Adam incapable of doing good. They therefore by nature deserve God's wrath and damnation. But the Article is milder in this that it does not say what is meant by God's wrath and damnation. Man in this natural state is unable to do good works, and all his works done before he is converted to Christ have the nature of sin. Only works that spring of faith in Jesus Christ are good. This statement is more fully set forth in Articles xvii. and xviii., but the Articles omit all mention of predestination to damnation.

"ARTICLE XVII.—*Of Predestination and Election.*

"Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour."

"ARTICLE XVIII.—*Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.*

"They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

"ARTICLE XX.—*Of the Authority of the Church.*

"The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

"ARTICLE XXI.—*Of the Authority of General Councils.*

"General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to Salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture."

"ARTICLE XXII.—*Of Purgatory.*

"The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."

"ARTICLE XXV.—*Of the Sacraments.*

"There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

"Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

"The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint *Paul* saith."

"ARTICLE XXVIII.—*Of the Lord's Supper.*

"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but it is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

"The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in

the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped."

"ARTICLE XXX.—*Of both kinds.*

"The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike."

"ARTICLE XXXI.—*Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.*

"The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits."

"ARTICLE XXXIV.—*Of the Traditions of the Church.*

"Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."

All these Articles have reference to the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Every one who assents to them must believe that the Scrip-

tures contain everything that is necessary for salvation, and that if any institution or Church decrees anything over and above what is in Scripture, such decree is to be disregarded. Only if it is in Scripture is it to have authority.

The person who assents to Article xxii. rejects the doctrine of Purgatory and Pardons, and agrees to take no part in the worshipping and adoration of Images and Reliques and the Invocation of Saints.

The person who assents to Articles xxv. and xxviii. pledges himself not to exhibit the wine and the bread of the Lord's Supper to be gazed on, and not to carry them about in processions or otherwise.

The person who signs Articles xxx. and xxxi. condemns Roman masses and the Romish practice of denying the cup to the laity.

The person who signs Article xxxiv. claims for his Church full power to deal with all rites ordained only by man's authority.

All these Articles are Protestant to the core.

"ARTICLE XXXVII.—*Of the Civil Magistrates.*

"The King's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of *England*, and other his Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction.

"The Bishop of *Rome* hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of *England*."

This Article places supreme power in Church and State in the hands of the King, and particularly rejects all exercise of power by the Pope within the King's realms.

CHAPTER III

LEGAL ASPECTS OF SUBSCRIPTION TO THE CREEDS

Sec. I.—SCOTCH CHURCH

THE law in regard to the Confession of Faith is contained in an Act of Parliament of 1693 :—[1]

"2. Act for Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church (Act 1693, c. 22).

"Our sovereign lord and lady, the king and queen's majesties, with advice and consent of the Estates of Parliament, ratifie, approve, and perpetually confirm the fifth Act of the second session of this current Parliament, intituled, Act ratifying the Confession of Faith, and settling Presbyterian Church government, in the whole heads, articles, and clauses thereof; and do further statute and ordain, that no person be admitted or continued for hereafter to be a minister or preacher within this Church, unless that he, having first taken and subscribed the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the assurance in manner appointed by another Act of this present session of Parliament made thereanent, do also subscribe the Confession of Faith, ratified in the foresaid fifth Act of the second session of this Parliament, declaring the same to be the confession of his faith, and that he owns the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine

[1] Innes, *Law of Creeds in Scotland*, pp. 172, 173.

which he will constantly adhere to; as likewise, that he owns and acknowledges Presbyterian Church government, as settled by the foresaid fifth Act of the second session of this Parliament, to be the only government of this Church, and that he will submit thereto, and concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof. And their majesties, with advice and consent foresaid, statute and ordain that uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all public ordinances within this Church be observed by all the said ministers and preachers, as the same are at present performed and allowed therein, or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same, and that no minister or preacher be admitted or continued for hereafter, unless that he subscribe to observe, and do actually observe, the aforesaid uniformity."

In harmony with this Act the General Assembly of the Church, in 1694, prepared a formula to be subscribed by ministers and probationers. It was as follows. I quote it from "Report of the Scottish Sub-Committee on Creeds, and Formulas to the General Presbyterian Council to be held at Philadelphia in 1880," p. 6:—

"I . . . do sincerely own and declare the above Confession of Faith, approven by former General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be the confession of my faith, and that I own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which I will constantly adhere to. As likewise that I own and acknowledge Presbyterian Church Government of this Church, now settled by law, by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies to be the only Government of

this Church, and that I will submit thereto, concur therewith, and never endeavour directly nor indirectly the prejudice or subversion thereof, and that I shall observe uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all public ordinances within this Church as the same are at present performed and allowed."

In 1711 the Assembly adopted a stronger form of subscription :—

"In 1711," the Report goes on to say, "(when the Church became seriously alarmed about designs said to be entertained for the subversion of her constitution) the General Assembly appointed the following somewhat stricter formula to be signed by all probationers when licensed, and ministers when ordained or admitted :—

"'I . . . do hereby declare that I do sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approven by the General Assemblies of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by diverse Acts of Parliament since that time, to be the truths of God, and I do own the same as the confession of my faith. As likewise, I do own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in this Church, and also the Presbyterian Government and discipline now so happily established therein, which doctrine, worship, and Church Government, I am persuaded, are founded on the Word of God, and agreeable thereto: And I promise that, through the grace of God, I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and, to the utmost of my power, shall in my station assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and Government of this Church by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and

General Assemblies ; and that I shall, in my practice, conform myself to the said worship, and submit to the said discipline and Government, and never endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same ; and I promise that I shall follow no divisive course from the present establishment in this Church: Renouncing all doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever contrary to or inconsistent with the said doctrine, worship, discipline, or Government of this Church.'"[1]

In 1889 the Assembly returned to the Formula of 1693, with a few verbal alterations, which do not in any way affect the meaning. The Formula which

[1] Satisfactory answers must also be given to the following amongst other questions :—

(*a*) On the part of everyone ordained or admitted a minister.

"I. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners ?

"II. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approven by the General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be founded upon the Word of God, and do you acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith ; and will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and to the utmost of your power assert, maintain and defend the same, and the purity of worship as presently practised in this national Church," etc. ?

"III. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Bourignian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions contrary to and inconsistent with the aforesaid Confession of Faith ?"

(*b*) On the part of every probationer licensed to preach :—

"I. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners ?

"II. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, approven by the General Assemblies of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament since that time, to be the truths of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and do you own the whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith ?"

all ministers and probationers have to sign is as follows :—[1]

"I declare the Confession of Faith, approven by former General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be the confession of my faith, and I own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine, which I will constantly adhere to. As likewise I own and acknowledge Presbyterian Church government, as now and for long time settled by law, to be the only government of this Church, and I will submit thereto and concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof. As also I will observe that uniformity of worship and of the administration of all public ordinances in this Church, as the same are at present performed and allowed, or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same."

The Assembly of 1889 also altered the questions which are put to ministers before their ordination, but the alterations were consistent with the complete fulfilment of the obligations laid down in the Act of 1693. Question 2 is, "Do you declare the Confession of Faith of this Church to be the confession of your faith?"

A resolution carried in the Assembly of 1903 made a serious alteration in the minister's attitude to the Confession of Faith. The resolution is as follows :—[2]

"Finding that ambiguity exists as to the authority of the Confession of Faith, to which all office-bearers

[1] *The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, convened at Edinburgh, May* 23, 1889. Blackwood, 1889, p. 34. [2] *Principal Acts of General Assembly*, etc., 1901, p. 73.

in the Church are required to subscribe according to the Formula prescribed by Act of Parliament, 1693, the General Assembly, considering that the said Confession is based upon Holy Scripture, and having specially in view Chapter i. sections 9, 10, Chapter xx. section 2, and also Chapter xxxi. section 4, wherein it is expressly set forth, 'That God alone is the Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of Faith and Worship'; 'That the Supreme Judge by which all controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentences we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture,' hereby declare that the Confession of Faith is to be regarded as an infallible rule of Faith and Worship only in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit."

The decisions of the Law Courts during the Disruption period, and the opinions expressed by the judges in the late case, are to the effect that the Church of Scotland has no right to alter the Act of 1693, and the only way in which a change can be introduced is by persuading Parliament to amend or abrogate the Act of 1693. It follows from this that the action of the Assembly of 1903 is null and void, and that no minister is entitled to stipend, manse, or glebe who does not subscribe to the Confession of Faith as the confession of his own faith. It was also clearly brought out in the late case that he must take

the words of the Confession in their ordinary sense, and not with any reserve or unexpressed explanation of the terms satisfactory only to himself. The question then arises, Is it sufficient for the minister to subscribe the Confession of Faith as his own faith whether he really believes it or not? Is he entitled to take the stipend, manse, and glebe, or to retain them, if he deviates in his faith in the slightest degree from the doctrines of the Confession of Faith? Is not everyone, for instance, who does not believe in the creation of the world in six days or in the existence of an absolutely pure Hebrew text of the Old Testament and an absolutely pure Greek text of the New, or in the Pope as Antichrist, bound to resign stipend, manse, and glebe? Other legal questions arise. Is a heritor bound to contribute to the stipend of a minister and to providing a manse and glebe, or to repairing a manse for a minister who he knows does not believe the entire Confession of Faith, or is it not his duty to refuse these contributions to one who is not legally entitled to them? Then, again, is the Church acting legally in being a party to illegal acquisitions of stipends, manses, and glebes by ordinary ministers who are known not to believe the entire Confession, and who would state at once that they do not believe the entire Confession of Faith if the question were put to them explicitly? There seems also uncertainty as to the mode of legal procedure. The law is that only the man who

believes every word of the Confession of Faith as his own faith is entitled to stipend, manse, and glebe. Hundreds have obtained these pecuniary advantages who do not believe portions of the Confession. They are in illegal possession of them. Who is to punish them for thus breaking the law? Or can they do it with impunity? Or is the Government bound to prosecute all who do not believe the entire Confession, confiscate the property, and apply it to such uses as may seem good to Parliament? And is the minority who believe the whole Confession, if such a minority exists, entitled to take possession of all the moneys which have been bequeathed or gifted to the Church of Scotland? These and similar questions are for the lawyers and civil courts to decide; but surely there ought to be some clear exposition of the law in all these matters.

Sec. II.—CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Church of Scotland has been generally inclined to maintain that it ought to settle its own creed and arrange its own religious services. It has consequently been very unwilling to call in the aid of Parliament in these matters and so the Act of 1693 has remained unaltered, and by the Act of Security, 1707, it is provided and declared "that the foresaid true Protestant religion contained in the above-mentioned Confession of Faith . . . shall remain and

continue unalterable." The Church of England, on the other hand, has not striven for this independence, but holds the belief expressed in the Articles that the King is head of the Church, and has the chief power in all causes, whether ecclesiastical or civil. It is to Parliament or other civil judicatures, therefore, that the Church of England can go for settlement of ecclesiastical matters, and frequent recourse has been had to Parliament from the earliest times down to the present. From early times members of the English Church have urged that there should be some laxity in the terms of subscription, and the matter was last settled by an Act of Parliament passed in 1865, which ordained the following form of subscription for persons admitted to any benefice :—

"I.....do solemnly make the following Declaration: I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority."

It is easier for a priest of the Church of England to subscribe this, as far as doctrine is concerned, than it is for a minister of the Church of Scotland to sign the Confession. The minister of the Church of Scotland is bound to every word of the Confession, and

the Confession contains a much larger number of details than do the Thirty-nine Articles. The priest of the Church of England only gives his assent, and that may perfectly well mean that he does not necessarily believe every expression or clause in the Articles, but that he believes the substance.

But every one giving this assent must believe in the metaphysical idea or fiction of the substance of God, in the metaphysical distinction of persons, and that while there are three persons, all omniscient and almighty, the three are not three Gods but only one God. He must believe also that the idea of propagation of race is applicable to the Divine Being. He must also believe that Christ as man was made out of the substance of the Virgin Mary, just as he was born God out of the substance of the Father, the material substance being a metaphysical idea or fiction as much as the substance of the Father is. He must, in fact, believe in all the metaphysical explanations which were devised in the fourth century by wrangling divines to silence those members of the Church who disagreed with them. He must also believe all the books of our present Bibles to be canonical or divinely inspired, though he is not bound so closely to all the contents of these books as the Scotch minister. In regard to original sin and divine grace he must hold the same opinions as the Scotch minister, but he is not committed to so many details. These are only some of the opinions which

he must hold if he is to be entitled to his benefice, and if he rejects any one of them, he is legally disqualified for holding the benefice. He must also believe all the statements made in regard to the Church of Rome and its practices and doctrines, and the priest of the Church of England who does not believe them is not legally entitled to a benefice.

The same questions also which arise in connexion with the temporalities of the Church of Scotland arise in connexion with the temporalities of the Church of England. Are proprietors entitled to refuse tithes to those who do not hold the doctrines of the Articles, or who adopt practices condemned by the Articles? Is the Government bound to prosecute them for breaking the law? Are bishops justified in ordaining priests, in regard to whom they are certain, or can make themselves certain, that they do not believe some of the Articles, and that they adopt practices contrary to them? If the matter were tried by a court of law, would not the decision be that all who have discussed freely the history of the Old and New Testaments, and the doctrine of the various writers of the books, are not entitled to obtain or keep benefices, and that none of the ritualist party can legally hold a benefice?

Possibly it is only some members of the Low Church party that could sign the declaration that they assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion without any reservation. And they alone would be

able to hold benefices legally. The rest would have to surrender their benefices to the State. But the formula of baptism unquestionably attributes the power of regeneration to the performance of that rite, and there are some other statements in the ritual formulas with which they do not agree. Besides this, the Low Church has made, during recent years, considerable changes in its beliefs, such as those relating to inspiration, if I may judge from a work by the Rev. H. Lawrence Phillips (Eliot Stock, 1904), called *The Creed of an Evangelical Churchman.* If this be the case, it is possible that there is not a single priest in the Church of England who is entitled legally to hold a benefice. All would probably be bound legally to surrender their benefices if the case came to be decided by our legal courts.

CHAPTER IV

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS

THE moral effect of compulsory subscription to a creed and to a ritual is seen in two points. First, such subscription unquestionably deters a number of conscientious men from accepting an office which they cannot obtain but by signing a creed, portions of which they do not believe, and assenting to a ritual of which they do not entirely approve. Candidates for the priesthood of the English Church are in a worse plight than candidates for the ministry of the Scotch Church in regard to ritual, for the candidates of the English Church give their assent to the Book of Common Prayer, and promise that in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments they will use the form in the said book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority. Now in the worship of God the rule is laid down in Scripture, and is confirmed by the unanimous testimony of common sense and of man's heart when it is in its normal condition, that God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The man who prays

should never utter a word that he does not believe with his whole heart, and everything that is said should be said with the firm conviction that God knows all the thoughts and lives of men, and that nothing is concealed from Him. Man, therefore, in communing with his Maker should be as accurate in his statements as he can be. He should not introduce into his prayers historical blunders. He should not say anything inconsistent with the absolute purity and holiness of the Divine Being, and every sentiment should aim at being a sentiment worthy of the noblest aspirations of man's nature. How are these plain principles carried out in the Prayer Book? Priests and congregations repeat to the Almighty such words as these: "O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery, yea happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children and throweth them against the stones."[1] "We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends. Let death come hastily upon them, and let them go down quick into hell."[2] "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths: smite the jawbones of the lions. . . . Let them consume away like a snail, and be like the untimely fruit of a woman, and let them not see the sun. . . . The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly."[3] "Let them fall upon the

[1] Psalm cxxxvii. 8, 9. [2] Psalm lv. 15. [3] Psalm lviii. 6, 7, 9.

edge of the sword, that they may be a portion for foxes."[1] "Let them be confounded and vexed ever more and more, let them be put to shame and perish."[2]

It is easy to find excuse for some of these wild expressions when we remember how serious were the trials which the Jews underwent at all periods, but especially in Maccabean times. They had many enemies and were in great perplexities. But the Christian has no enemies, and the attitude of his mind should be that of entire faith in God and contentment. The passages in the Psalms relating to vengeance on enemies become untrue as the representation of his feelings and beliefs, and should not be uttered as if they were his. Strike such passages out of the Psalms, and the rest of the words constitute the most beautiful, touching, and devout songs of praise and prayer in all literature and worship.

It seems to me also a doubtful thing to stereotype worship as expressed in old forms of worship. To take one notable instance. The Lord's Prayer is sacred to many in the forms in which it appears in the Prayer Book, for they have repeated it thousands of times; but they should put the question to themselves, What does the Almighty think of it? Does He wish that it should be repeated as a charm, or does He expect His worshippers

[1] Psalm lxiii. 11. [2] Psalm lxxxiii. 17.

to pray the prayers given in it? Now, first of all, it is doubtful whether it is the Lord's Prayer. It is not in the triple tradition of the Synoptics. It is not in St. Mark, and it is not in the Gospel of St. John. Its omission from the Gospels of St. Mark and St. John necessarily attracts notice, and suggests that there must be some explanation of this. Did the writers intentionally omit it, or was it unknown to them? Then the forms in which it occurs in St. Matthew and St. Luke differ much from each other. In the best MSS. of St. Luke the Prayer, as in the Revised Version, is: "Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins: for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation." Dr. Chase, in an admirable monograph on "The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church," maintains that the Lord's Prayer "was originally in Aramaic,"[1] and "that in the period which intervened between the occasion when our Lord first taught the Prayer and the time when the Evangelists gave it a place in the Gospels, it had passed through one stage and had already entered upon the second stage of its history."[2] The form in St. Luke would belong to the second stage. The MSS. of St. Luke[3] contained a singular variation. The words, "Let thy

[1] p. 13. [2] p. 12.

[3] The evidence is given in Tischendorf *ad locum*, and by Chase.

holy Spirit come upon us and purify us," were read instead of "Thy kingdom come," and the frequent and peculiar mention of the Holy Spirit throughout St. Luke's Gospel might suggest that the words came from St. Luke's own hand. But however this may be, it is remarkable that the words used in St. Luke could now be used by all Christians in the present day without any reserve, except perhaps the prayer for forgiveness. But such a statement does not apply to the form in St. Matthew. The opening words, "Our Father which art in Heaven," and the prayer, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," imply the belief that God resides in a region close above our visible sky, and that there are myriads of angels and other beings up there who have never sinned. The word heaven teems with beautiful associations, and we willingly forget that the word translated "heaven" is merely our ordinary sky, not believed now by anyone to be a solid flooring or firmament supporting wide habitable regions. Then the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," is appropriate only if it were said in the morning. It would be nonsensical if it were said after the person had eaten his daily bread. It would make better sense, and more in harmony with the Greek words, if the translation ran, "Give us this day our bread for the coming day," as the margin of the Revised Version suggests. And the words would be very appropriate to the poor disciples of Jesus, who probably lived

from hand to mouth, and were glad to pluck the ears of corn to satiate their hunger as they passed through the fields on the Sabbath day,[1] and most of his followers may have been paid day by day, as in the parable.[2] But the words are totally inappropriate to those who attend our churches, for their daily food is assured for them by invested capital, or by comfortable salaries, and even the poor are generally sure of their food for a week on end at least.

The word ἐπιούσιος, translated "daily" or "to-morrow's," occurs nowhere but in the Lord's Prayer in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and the meaning "to-morrow's" is only the most probable of the meanings assigned to it. Naturally some sought a higher meaning in the word, and Jerome translated it "supersubstantialem"—that is, the bread that feeds the soul for eternal life—the bread mentioned in the Gospel of St. John.

The next prayer, "Forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us," is a Jewish prayer. It is based on the idea that God can forgive sins out of His pure mercy without any expiation or satisfaction of Divine justice, and the following clause implies that man can do the same to his fellow-men, without any satisfaction of human justice. It would, therefore, be difficult for one who signs the Thirty-nine Articles to utter the prayer in the form in which it occurs in the Gospels.

[1] Matt. xii. 1. [2] Matt. xx. 2.

The variations in the reading of the Lord's Prayer, and in the interpretation of some of its words, prove that the early Church had no hesitation in altering the forms to suit their own ideas, and even in the Prayer Book two different forms, one of which cannot be correct, occur in the same service, that of the Morning Prayer, and again in that of the Evening Prayer.

In these same services it is curious to listen to the people of the present day chanting odes composed by Jewish men or women who rejoiced that their Messiah had come to deliver them from their enemies and from the hands of all that hated them, and to give them the independence which they imagined Jehovah had sworn to procure for them in His holy Covenant. The independence is as far off as ever.

Perhaps the portion of the service which may awaken the greatest qualms of conscience is that which contains the Creeds. It is difficult to conceive what idea these can represent in the worship of the Almighty. The first formal Creed, the Nicene, was prepared at the command of the Emperor Constantine, in order to produce harmony and peace in the Church. But to his sorrow he found that it failed to do this. And subsequent Creeds were framed in order to deprive those who were deemed heterodox from the benefits of State connexion and sometimes to punish them. They do not involve the feeling of reverence or worship. The Almighty knows what the utterers

of the words feel in regard to them, and surely the circumstance reaches sublimity when poor, frail mortals inform the Omniscient that every one who does not believe the metaphysical doctrine of the Trinity cannot be saved, but without doubt must perish everlastingly.

But the second moral aspect of the present state of matters deserves careful consideration. There is no doubt that a large body of the people considers that a person who signs a document as the confession of his faith, or assents to Articles of Religion, while all the time he does not believe some of the doctrines contained in the Confession or in the Articles, is acting a dishonest part, and special indignation is felt when the signature is made in order that pecuniary advantages may be gained. It is not easy to ascertain how widely this opinion is spread, but it is met with everywhere, and among learned and unlearned. People thus come to distrust ministers and priests, and this distrust forms a great barrier to the advancement of true religion. Particularly strong is this opinion in regard to those who carry on ritual practices in direct opposition to the Articles to which they have given assent. A man may hold many opinions contrary to the Confession or Articles without attracting much or any attention. It is only when his opinions are regarded as outrageously antagonistic to prevalent beliefs that the popular mind takes an interest in them. But the simplest

man can see with his own eyes that the priest is violating the practical ideas laid down in the Articles. Accordingly, the most violent denunciations are made against those who introduce what are called Romish practices into the ritual of the English Church. Yet the men who have signed the Confession of Faith without believing all the doctrines, or carried on practices denounced in the Articles, are not sinners above others. Their conduct admits of defence. Those who belong to the Scotch Church hold that that Church has always claimed considerable independence and afforded much latitude of opinion, that as young men they were anxious to become ministers of the Church, that the obligations of the Law seemed obsolete, that in choosing the ministry as their profession they were not actuated by pecuniary consideration at all or mainly, and that they might have made much more pecuniary gain if they had chosen some other profession. And many of the men who have thus thought and thus think have been amongst the greatest ornaments of the Church through their piety, and added much to the intelligence of the nation by their learning. This can also be said emphatically of the Ritualists and Broad-Churchmen of the English Church. Many of the Ritualists have been eminently earnest and devoted to their work, and have proved themselves the trusted friends of the working classes. Many of the Broad Church are distinguished for

every virtue, wide philanthropy, a deep concern in all that relates to the welfare of man and a devotion to truth and learning, that have placed the theology of England in such a position as to command the attention and respect of the world.

CHAPTER V

THE REMEDY. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

IT is plain that, if what I have said is at all correct, there is need for immediate action. A large number of our best and most thoughtful men must be ill at ease. On a full consideration of their position in the light thrown on it by the opinions of the legal House of Lords, many may feel that they are not entitled to hold the paid offices which they now enjoy; for all the judges were of opinion that deviation in any way from the creeds of the Churches to which paid officials belong abrogates the right to receive the payment. And at any moment the question may be raised in a court of law whether a minister of the Established Church of Scotland or a priest of the Established Church of England is not retaining his stipend or his benefice in direct violation of the law of the land as expressly laid down in Acts of Parliament that have not been abolished.

The remedy to be applied to the present constitution of the Established Churches of England and Scotland is not easy to find, and the best minds of the country ought to be employed in searching for

it. I can only present a few considerations which cannot go beyond the force of mere suggestions.

First, an attempt might be made to frame a creed which might be agreeable to a larger number. But the difficulties here are enormous. It is impossible so to express, in comparatively few words, the dogmas which it is intended to express, for then the words become vague and general, and anyone can sign them. Whenever one goes beyond these vague and general terms, then arise two difficulties. First, the terms become more narrow and limited than those that are to be found in Scripture, and there is no guarantee for the correctness of the dogmas without assuming the infallibility of the persons who framed the dogmas. And, second, it is agreed in both Churches that it is only doctrines or dogmas which can be supported from the Scriptures that ought to be in a creed.

Second, some in Scotland would feel inclined to adopt the proposal or Declaratory Act of the Established Church of Scotland to the effect that the Confession of Faith is to be regarded as an infallible rule of Faith and Worship in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit. But it is not easy to understand the words "as interpreted by the Holy Spirit." And the question which most of all perplexes the mind of the present age is left unsettled. In the present age it is impossible to prevent the books of the Old and New Testament being

treated like the books sacred and profane of other nations. Inquiry will be made into their origin and history. Scholars will ascertain their meaning, not by traditional or allegorical methods, but by determining what the authors of the books meant to say to the persons for whom they were written, and scholars will be guided in this matter by investigations into the mode of thought and the history of the period in which they were written. Now such inquiries are sure to show that there was wide divergence of thought in the various periods, and that the authors of the books differed from each other in their doctrines just as in actual life St. Paul resisted St. Peter to the face because he stood condemned.

A third plan is to leave the doctrines to be determined by the Churches themselves. In the Scotch Established Church the General Assembly would have the power, proper precautions being taken that no doctrine should be altered and no new doctrine introduced except on certain conditions, and a similar arrangement might be made with the Convocations of the English Established Church. But in this case the existing Acts of Parliament relating to the subject would have to be abolished. And in the Parliamentary discussion of the subject it might be very difficult to convince Members of Parliament that national funds could be assigned to bodies beyond their control for the inculcation of any doctrines which these might please to adopt.

Fourth, it might be worth consideration whether a creed is of any use whatever for religious purposes. The creeds historically were made to exclude men from the Church and to brand heretics. But they do not regulate or inspire belie , and they do not determine the conduct which follows on belief. The demons, St. James thought, were completely orthodox. "Thou believest that God is one, thou doest well, the demons also believe and shudder." It is easy to give assent to creeds if you are indifferent about the matter; but the Christianity of Christ insists on good deeds as the criterion of attachment to him and of approbation at the final judgment. His summary of belief and of practice is contained in the answer to the question put to him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, "The first is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." The remark of the scribe who had put the question received the approbation of Christ. "And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all the

whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."[1] In Matthew xxii. 40, Jesus says that "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets," and in Luke x. 27 the obedience to these commandments is laid down as the sure way to inherit eternal life. A church based on this belief and carrying it out in practice would be an unmingled blessing to the world, and no one could easily raise doubts as to the soundness and wisdom of the commandments. This, then, should be the formula of admission to the Church of Christ. And many people are now noticing that Christ's sayings contain almost no dogmatic statements—that, indeed, he remained in his religious practice a Jew to the end of his days on earth, and as a Jew dwelt upon concrete thoughts and facts, and indulged in no metaphysical or even logical schemes of salvation or of man or of the universe. "Back to Jesus!" is their cry. And let the further development of dogmatics and of systems be regarded as arising from a natural tendency of human nature to inquire, but not as unbreakable fetters of thought and practice, or as impassable barriers to love and friendship.

In these circumstances it might be well for the present generation to consider the proposals made by two of the greatest thinkers, Coleridge and Arnold, in regard to this subject. They saw that even in their time there was no National Church in

[1] Mark xii. 28–33.

England—that the English Established Church was so only in name: for nearly the half of the whole population did not belong to that Church, and a large number who nominally belonged to it were indifferent to its doctrines, and went to its worship purely because it was the fashion. Both of them urged that funds belonging to the whole nation should be spent for the benefit of the whole nation. Coleridge states what he conceived to be the work of a national Church thus:[1] "The proper *object* and end of the National Church is civilisation with freedom; and the duty of its ministers, could they be contemplated merely and exclusively as officiaries of the *National* Church, would be fulfilled in the communication of that degree and kind of knowledge to all, the possession of which is necessary for all in order to their CIVILITY. By civility I mean all the qualities essential to a citizen, and devoid of which no people or class of people can be calculated on by the rulers and leaders of the State for the conservation or promotion of its essential interests." Coleridge's idea corresponds with the idea of the early Church as to its object and aim—with this difference, however, that the national aspect of it was unknown, and its aim was to make all men, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, members of one great community, of whom Christ was the leader and God the absolute sovereign. Arnold brings out this idea fully in his *Fragment on*

[1] *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830), p. 58.

the Church.[1] "Christ's Church, then," he says, "was to be a Society, all whose members were to be active in promoting the Society's objects. And this object was to be the putting down of moral evil, both within the Church and without it. It was to be the leaven to leaven the world—clearly, that is, to change its moral character; and with respect to its operations upon itself, how magnificently is it described as working by the grace of its divine Head through the instrumentality of every joint and member performing its own portion of the work, to its own growth in truth and in love, in intellectual and moral perfection, according to no less a standard than the perfection of nature of Christ Himself, the All-wise and the Most Holy. For this the members each separately and the body all together are to labour together with their Lord, that the Church, this great Society, may become fully glorious, 'not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.'"

"There is, then, a Society in existence for the putting down of all moral evil by the combined exertions of all its members. This Society is the Church of Christ, and every Christian in England is a member of it. How is it that we have not rightly appreciated our relations and duties as such? How is it that the Church amongst us retains so faint a resemblance to a society, and works with such insufficient efficacy

[1] *Fragment on the Church* (1845), p. 150.

—nay, apparently with so inadequate a conception —of its true object? The explanation of the fact is humiliating indeed, but it ought to be most instructive."

The Scotch Reformers could not be expected to have such broad and grand conceptions as those which Dr. Arnold strove to impress on his generation, but they held something like the idea of Coleridge in a somewhat inchoate condition. The funds which were in their time at the disposal of the nation were funds that had belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and the Reformers expressed their doubts whether such funds belonged to ecclesiastics. Among the Articles of which the Lollards of Kyle were accused in 1494, is this one: "That teythes ought not to be given to Ecclesiasticall men." Again, in 1547, John Rough and John Knox[1] were summoned before a Convention of Grayfriars and Blackfriars in St. Leonard's Yards in St. Andrews, and one of the Articles brought against them was: "The teindis of Goddis law do not apperteane of necessitie to the Kirkmen."[2] In harmony with this opinion, the composers of the *First Book of Discipline* advised the Great Council of Scotland to devote the funds to the Church, to the poor, and to the schools. "These twa sortis of men, that is to say, the Ministers and the Pure, togidder with the Schollis, when

[1] *Knox's Works*, Laing's ed., vol. i. p. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

ordour shall takin thairanent, must be sustened upon the chargeis of the Churche."[1] And they make provision for the ministers, the poor, and universities and schools. The Universities, for instance, were to be doted with temporal lands, with rents and revenues of the Bishopricks' temporality and of the Churches Collegiate so far as their ordinary charges shall require.[2] But of this provision for the nation not a penny now goes to the poor or to the schools, and legislation has compelled the transference of a large portion of the teinds assigned to the Universities to the stipends of the parish ministers. The Established Church of Scotland also, like the Established Church of England, no longer represents the nation, its numbers being less than those of the other religious denominations in Scotland, though if all the Presbyterian Churches were to be united, their numbers would be much greater than those of all other denominations put together. These circumstances force reconsideration of the allocation of the funds to the Established Church of Scotland. And it ought to be matter of great consideration what is the best way of disposing of them.

[1] *Knox's Works*, vol. ii. p. 221. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

CHAPTER VI

NON-ESTABLISHED CHURCHES AND NON-NATIONAL FUNDS

ALL remarks which have been made on remedies relate only to the funds which have been assigned by Parliament on condition in Scotland that every partaker of them shall believe every word of the Confession of Faith, and sign a statement to that effect; and on condition in England that every partaker of them shall give an honest assent to the Thirty-nine Articles and to the three Creeds contained in the Prayer Book and to everything else in the Prayer Book. But both Churches possess considerable endowments which have been bestowed on them in recent times. These endowments seem to be in the same position as the endowments belonging to other denominations. They are vested in trustees, and are regulated by the law of trust. It is in this connexion that the recent decision of the legal House of Lords has given rise to so much doubt, perplexity, and anxiety. And it has given rise to this anxiety because it is felt that the mode of trial, the diverse opinions expressed by the various

judges, and the results of the judgment have awakened in many strong feelings of dissatisfaction. The case stands thus:

The Free Church of Scotland wished to unite with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The great majority of the Free Church were long ago convinced that such a union would be beneficial to both Churches, but they saw that there might be financial difficulties in their way. They therefore obtained the best legal advice they could get. The very best lawyers that Scotland could produce gave their opinion that there was no legal obstacle to the union, and the union was effected. The case came before the Outer Division of the Court of Session, and the judge, distinguished for his acquaintance with Scotch ecclesiastical law, pronounced his judgment in favour of the United Free Church. The case was appealed to the Second Division of the Court of Session, and again three judges, who knew thoroughly the history and character of the Scotch Church and the Scotch people, confirmed the decision of the judge of the Outer House. An appeal was then made to the House of Lords, and there a mode of procedure followed which filled Scotsmen with astonishment. The presiding judge seemed to take up a position of direct antagonism to that of the previous judges, interrupted the counsel very frequently, and put questions which appeared to show ignorance of the most elementary facts of Scotch

belief and history. The hearing of evidence came to an end, and the judges took the case, as the Scotch term is, *avizandum*. But everyone was perplexed by the extraordinary delay that ensued. Week after week passed, and no judgment was forthcoming. It was rumoured that the six judges were equally divided in opinion, and afterwards it was affirmed that Lord Shand had written out his opinion. No explanation has yet been given why the judges did not meet and deliver their opinions.

Lord Shand died, and it was therefore necessary that there should be a new trial. Again great dissatisfaction was felt that the Lord Chancellor, in his selection of new judges, had chosen two English instead of two Scotch judges. It was announced that Lord Kinross had been requested to act, but he was too ill in health to be expected to undertake the task. There were, however, two Scotch judges in the House of Lords eminently fitted to consider the case. And it certainly requires explanation why they were not chosen.

The decision at length came. Five of the seven judges came to one conclusion, the other two came to a different. The two agreed with the four judges of the Court of Session and with Lord Shand. Thus there were seven judges for the conclusion which the legal House of Lords by a majority rejected, and five judges for the decision which became final. Now how can a layman in law matters put any confidence in

such a decision? Can that be correct law which seven able judges declare to be wrong and only five to be right? The decision destroys all confidence in the judges. And if the decisions were placed before the Scotch people, there is no doubt that they would state their belief that they place much greater confidence in the ability of the seven judges than in the ability of the five, and if they had, in perfect ignorance of the result, to make their choice between the decisions, they would have much preferred the decision of the seven to that of the five.

When the decision was made public there was one startling anomaly that showed itself at once to those acquainted with the circumstance. This was that men now living, who had given large sums to the funds in dispute, saw their contributions diverted and set apart for purposes for which they never would have given them. And those who knew many of the most generous of the deceased donors were quite certain that they also would never have given a penny for the objects for which the five judges now assigned their contributions. There thus arose the feeling that the five judges had made some mistake, for it was not conceivable that our laws had been so badly framed as to render it possible that judges could divert large sums of money to purposes for which the donors would certainly not have contributed anything. The doubtfulness in regard to the decision was increased when people had the opportunity to

read the arguments used for it in the authorised reports of the pleadings. Probably the doubts would have been increased if the first pleadings before the House of Lords had been published along with the second, for the five judges showed remarkable ignorance, real or pretended, of the affairs and theology of Scotland. Here are specimens. Lord James says to Mr. Haldane: "The first thing is to understand you. I hope I have tried my best, but I cannot say I have succeeded very well so far." Lord Alverstone: "Would you kindly tell me what you mean by 'antinomy'?" The Lord Chancellor: "That might do very well, but I am not quite certain that I follow all you say, because you are dealing here with metaphysics and not with theology, I think." Lord James: "I never knew how incapable I was of understanding these things until I heard your argument. I know it is my fault entirely, but I cannot follow you." Lord Davey: "I do not know what may be the constitution [of the trust]." The Lord Chancellor: "I do not know, I am sure." These are only specimens of what went on throughout the trial. One sentence will be enough as proof how completely the Lord Chancellor was ignorant of the character of the Scotch Churches, and I allude to it because a false idea prevails generally about Scotch Churches. He says in giving his judgment:—

"If this be so, there is no lack of material from which to deduce the identity of the Free Church of

Scotland. Its founders left their Claim, Declaration, and Protest to stand for all time as a clear exposition, both of their reasons for leaving the Church of Scotland when they did leave it, and as a profession of their faith as the true Church of Scotland though separated from the Establishment, which in their view was itself heretical from its submission to the temporal power in what they regarded as exclusively spiritual."[1]

The word which is totally inappropriate in this statement is the word "heretical." The Free Church never deemed the Established Church heretical, and the Established Church never deemed the Free Church heretical.

There were many secessions from the Established Church, but they were all secessions or so-called Reforms, not schisms or heresies. The idea of schism or heresy forms no part of the conceptions of a Scottish Churchman. A few, imitating Anglican Divines, have lately used the words — but these words are Anglican and Roman Catholic, not Scotch. People may hive off from a Scotch Church, but the Scotch Church from which they separate does not attach any moral fault to their religious action. Their opinions may be deemed wrong, but it is always allowed that they have a right to form their own opinions and to take their own way. And in doing so they incur no blame from man and do not imperil

[1] *The Free Church of Scotland Appeals* (Orr's edition), p. 563.

their case before God. If they believe in Christ, they will be saved in whatever Church they may find a resting-place. The separation is not a schism, and does not separate them from the universal Church, which consists of all, in every part of the world, who are doing God's will. There is at present a wide catholicity (in the true sense of the term) among Scotchmen, and even the great majority of those who have signed the Confession of Faith as the confession of their faith, and who ought to believe that the Pope of Rome is " that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ," will readily acknowledge, as far as they can judge, that the present Pope is a good man, was an earnest and devoted pastor, and is a true member of the Universal Church with every reason to hope for salvation like other Christians, though they also cannot but wonder that a man with only a moderate amount of culture and a moderate knowledge of theology should receive the worship of thousands and be invested with a kind of infallibility, simply because he received a majority of votes of an assembly of Italian and other priests, animated by motives not all of them pure or devout. And when in Scotland a man is accused of what is called heresy, the whole question is simply whether with the opinions he holds he is entitled to remain a member of the Church in which he is accused and enjoy its emoluments, but almost no one denies him

the right to entertain any opinion he chooses, and almost no one would refuse to believe that he may be as good a Christian as the people that pronounce sentence against him. Indeed, a heresy hunter in Scotland occupies an unenviable position. From this account of the religious attitude of Scotland we must except the Highland "Men" and their ministers who form the body of the Minority Free Church, but are insignificant in numbers.

The ignorance, or assumed ignorance, of the five judges during the pleadings, or in their opinions, naturally awakes great distrust in their power to come to a sound conclusion. And what has followed since the judgment was issued adds to the distrust. Have the five judges convinced the other Scottish judges who tried the case that they were wrong? There cannot be a doubt that the opposite is the case, and that these are more convinced than ever that they were right. Have they convinced the eminent counsel, especially Mr. Asher and Mr. Haldane, two of the greatest lawyers in any part of the world? Have they convinced any man of weight and importance? The Journals are against them. And those who are bound to say the best they can of them do not go much further than state that the judges did well, as far as the materials put before them enabled them to decide. Here, unquestionably, something has to be said in their behalf. For the case was so new and the issues so strange that

various aspects of the case may not have been presented fully to them, probably because counsel did not think such presentation would be necessary.

When we come to the arguments, opinions, and conclusions of the five judges, it is often not easy to make out what they are, not in consequence of the difficulty of the subject, but from the vagueness of the language and incompleteness of the thinking. And there arises, naturally, the feeling that the whole subject of the position of non-established Churches as regards funds requires much fuller consideration. As far as one can see, the judges came to the conclusion that the funds were to be regarded as in the hands of trustees, and that the law of trusts must regulate the determination of the ownership of the funds. But the judges do not state plainly what part of the law of trusts is to be applied in this case. Apparently they consider one of the regulations in regard to trusts to be that if persons contribute funds for a particular purpose, and hand them over to trustees, and if other persons contribute funds for a different purpose to the same trustees, the trustees must use all the funds for the first purpose and cannot use them for the second, whatever may have been the wishes of the second set of donors. Only the wishes of the first donors are to be regarded. An illustration may show what seems to the five judges to be the law of the case. A, B, and C hand over £1000 to seven trustees to help incurables.

The seven trustees, following their own judgment, and believing that A, B, and C would agree with them in this, resolve to build a hospital in which all the incurables would be housed together. But in process of time the trustees differ from each other in regard to this mode of treatment, and six of them have come to the conclusion, in consequence of the experience that they have had, that they could help incurables more effectively by boarding them out; the remaining one adheres to the plan of having a separate institution for them. The six trustees announce that they have changed their ideas, and afterwards D, E, and F hand over to them £10,000 to help the incurables. The five judges seem to think that notwithstanding that the contributors knew fully the change of operations which the six trustees contemplated, the £10,000 of the last contributors must be administered solely by the one trustee who adheres to the original plan, and the judges refuse to listen to evidence about the intentions of any but the first contributors. Surely the state of the law in regard to this matter ought to be made clear.

The five judges, having settled that only the law of trusts must determine the point at issue, then proceed to inquire how the identity of a church can be established. They do this because the funds are vested in the General Trustees of the Free Church of Scotland appointed by the General Assembly of

that Church. They refuse to discuss the question what is the constitution of the Free Church, and they take no note of the fact that every beneficiary of the Church subscribes a formula which binds him "to assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church by Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods and General Assemblies, together with the liberty and exclusive jurisdiction thereof"; and, further on, the beneficiary says, "I shall follow no divisive course from the doctrine, worship, discipline, government and exclusive jurisdiction of this Church."

Instead of discussing the constitution of the Church or Trust, they discuss what constitutes the identity of a Church. This is not a legal question, as far as I can see. The problem is much wider. Indeed, the question as to what constitutes the identity of an individual has puzzled philosophers. And to determine what constitutes a body of individuals called a Church is a still more perplexing problem. But the Lord Chancellor seemed to have no doubt and no difficulty. He said: "Speaking generally, one would say that the identity of a religious community described as a Church must consist in the unity of its doctrines. Its Creeds, Confessions, Formularies, Tests, and so forth, are apparently intended to ensure the unity of the faith which its adherents profess, and certainly among all Christian Churches the essential idea of a Creed or Confession of Faith

appears to be the public acknowledgment of such and such religious views as the bond of union which binds them together as one Christian community." To understand this matter it is essential to distinguish clearly between two meanings of the word "creed." The word may mean an opinion or set of opinions on any subject whatsoever. In this sense no man can exist without a creed. He must have ideas on the life which he is leading. But "creed" means also a formula of religious belief embodied in definite words intended to be binding on religious communities. It is in this last sense that the Lord Chancellor uses it. And it may be affirmed with certainty that, if his statement is to hold, then there does not exist a Church on the face of the earth. The early Church had no fixed formula, no Creed, or Confession, or Test, and therefore it has no right to the name of Church, though congregations received that name from the days of St. Paul. Many Churches of the present day are in the same predicament as the early Church. The Independents, for instance, have no fixed formulas. They have creeds in the first sense of the word, and quite definite enough, but they refuse to commit themselves to an exact and binding statement of their belief, except such as each one makes for himself. Then every Church has lost its identity. The Roman Catholic has adopted considerable additions to its dogmas, its mode of thought has changed with the

centuries, as Cardinal Newman and M. Loisy have demonstrated, and its present attitude to many religious questions is widely different from what it was in the eighteenth or the first half of the nineteenth century. The English Church has completely lost its identity. Even its formulas have changed; and its mode of thought and attitude to religious questions are peculiar to the present age. Most theologians, moreover, believe that a Church ought to advance with the times, and adapt itself to the various tendencies and discoveries of the age. M. Loisy[1] has pointed this out with great emphasis: "In their warfare against tradition, the most enlightened Protestant theologians, those who, like Herr Harnack, recognise a kind of relative necessity in the Catholic development, argue none the less eagerly about it, as though it were not evident that the desire to restore Christianity to its primitive form and organization is really a desire to condemn it to death, and as if change were not the natural condition of its preservation and the expression of its vitality. They are less exacting for themselves, when concerned to justify their own religious convictions, unlikely as they are to be confused with the Gospel of Jesus. What else do they do but adapt the Gospel to the needs of their special consciences? The Church also, from the beginning, adapts the Gospel to the needs of the men she addresses."

[1] *The Gospel and the Church.* Translated by C. Horne (1903).

Again he says: "To be identical with the religion of Jesus, the Catholic Church has no more need to reproduce exactly the forms of the Galilean gospel than a man has need to preserve at fifty the proportions, features, and manner of life of the day of his birth, in order to be the same individual. The identity of a man is not ensured by making him return to his cradle."

And again he says further: "The identity of the Church or of the man is not determined by permanent immobility of external forms, but by continuity of existence and consciousness of life through the perpetual transformations which are life's condition and manifestation."

M. Loisy's opinions are shared by all our great thinkers on the nature and destiny of the Church or of a Church. And if the English law is opposed to this, then there is plain need that the law should be altered. But even if we were to grant that the Lord Chancellor were right in his opinion, we have still to discover what exactly that opinion is and what is its application to the case. Is it a formal and authoritative adherence to the creed that is meant? Then in this case the Majority Free Church and the United Presbyterians never in General Assembly or Synod resolved that the Confession of Faith was not their creed, and the United Free Church still acknowledges the Confession of Faith as its creed. Or is it meant that every

member of a Church must not only acknowledge the Confession of Faith as a statement of his own belief, but he must actually believe every word of it? This seems to be the interpretation of the law on which the five judges have acted. But if this be the right interpretation of the law, then it would be easy to prove that neither the United Free Church nor the Minority Free Church have any title to the funds. There cannot be a doubt that the persons composing these Churches have all changed their opinions in regard to some of the doctrines of the creed through the overwhelming influence of the progress of the ages, and it might be added that there is the greatest probability that three-fourths of these persons do not comprehend some of the most important of the doctrines laid down in the Confession, and cannot therefore believe them.

The five judges having determined that complete belief in all the statements made in the Confession of Faith, in the exact sense in which a lawyer would interpret the words, is essential to the identity of the Church in question, proceeded to ascertain the facts in regard to this matter. And the arguments for denying the identity of the Majority Free Church with the Free Church of 1843 and of 1900 were two. The Majority Free Church, it was said, had abandoned the doctrine of Predestination as set forth in the Confession, and because of union with the United Presbyterians they had abandoned

the doctrine of Establishment. In regard to the first, it was the Lord Chancellor that argued against the United Free Church, and he was supported only by one of his seven colleagues; his other colleagues would not follow him in it—not even the other three of the five who voted against the United Free Church. And no sooner was the judgment announced than prominent members of the Minority Free Church tried to emphasise as a fact that they also disagreed with the Lord Chancellor, and felt themselves bound to proclaim a free and unlimited gospel, the obligation being in no way impeded by the doctrine of election.

The only question, then, in dispute was the establishment question. It is needless to say that this is not a legal point. It is a question of facts; a question of interpretation and of history. It was viewed from two points—(1) The five judges alleged that the United Free Church had abandoned the doctrine of the Confession of Faith in approving of disestablishment. We have already seen that the Confession of Faith contains no pronouncement in regard to the establishment and endowment of churches. But it is extraordinary that legal men should have used such an argument. The Article on which the argument is based does not contain the word State or Parliament, the sole power which could establish and endow a church, and it does not contain the words "establish" or "endow," or any

reference to funds and financial transactions. One cannot see how there could be any pronouncement on establishment and endowment without the words mentioned. The only thing on which the five judges could base their argument is that the words of the Article warranted the inference, that those who adopted the Article must approve of the policy of establishment. But I should think legal minds would at once refuse to base argument on inferences, unless these were irresistible and agreed to by all, and he who accepts articles of a creed is not bound to believe or assent to inferences which other people may draw from them. Here there was unquestionable failure on the part of the five judges.

The second point of view was the intentions of the original donors. It was alleged that the original donors gave their contributions in the belief that the Free Church was never to give up the opinion that the State ought to endow the Church, whether it did so or not. It seems to me difficult in the highest degree to believe that the Scotch people would see any reason for giving money in order to continue such an opinion. The Free Church had resolved to break their connexion with the State, or had broken it when the contributions were made. And it had broken it because the State had interfered with the religious action of the Church. The Church had made up its mind that it would give up all the emoluments of State aid in order that it might not be

impeded in whatever concerned religion. Is it conceivable that people who had made the greatest sacrifices to resist the State would contribute money in order that a theoretical opinion, which would in all probability never come into action, might be propagated? The Scotch people would be a nation of dreamers if they had done such a thing, and voluntaries would not have been among the contributors if such an idea had been in their minds. What proof was there that the original contributors had been so completely forgetful of themselves as to do this? The only or the principal proof was that Dr. Chalmers had announced the opinion strongly in his address as Moderator, and that the General Assembly had approved of the address. There is no doubt that Dr. Chalmers was strongly of opinion that there ought to be a connexion between Church and State, if that connexion could be one honourable to the Church. He had been arguing strenuously for this for years. And he thought that the State's help was requisite if Christianity was to reach the masses. There is no doubt that nearly all, probably all, the members of the Assembly were of this opinion. But the question is whether he and they deemed it an opinion essential to one's having connexion with the Church or to carrying on the work of the Church. That could not be the case. There are many opinions in Dr. Chalmers's Moderator's Address. Only some of them are important. Ap-

proval of the address did not imply that the Assembly approved of all the opinions, or that they thought all the opinions of equal importance. And it seems to me a misreading of Dr. Chalmers's character to suppose that he laid much stress on the opinion in question even at the time he spoke, and especially in his calmer hours. His words show that while he was emphatic on the point, he was conscious that it was of secondary importance. The main point which he urges is the opinion that the ecclesiastical ought not to be subjected to the civil power in things spiritual, that the Church had a government of her own, and within the proper sphere of that government a certain inherent liberty which, save by persecution, could not be violated. And when he comes to the question of establishment, "the authority of Christ over the kings and governments of earth and the counterpart duty of these governments," he takes care, even in the impetuous defence of his own previous exertions and his remembrance of the extremely bitter controversies in which he had been engaged, to say: "This may be termed a less principle than the other, of inferior consideration in itself and inferior consequence to the vital or spiritual well-being of Christ's Church upon earth." And he says about those who might differ from him: "They might be men with whom we differ and yet with whom we can agree to differ; they might be coadjutors in the great work of evangelising the people of

our land—brethren with whom we can hold sweet and profitable counsel on the *capita fidei* or weightier matters of the law, having one faith and one Lord and one baptism." Here Dr. Chalmers pronounces most emphatically that the principle of establishment was not one of the *capita fidei*, one of the essential doctrines of a church. And his subsequent utterances were all in harmony with this exposition of the relative importance of beliefs. The true Dr. Chalmers comes out in the words with which he introduced Dr. Merle D'Aubigné to the General Assembly in 1845: "Among the great majority of Evangelical Dissenters in this country, I am not aware of any topics of difference which I do not regard as so many men of straw; and I shall be exceedingly delighted if these gentlemen get the heads of the various denominations to meet together and consent to make a bonfire of them."[1] It is inconceivable, therefore, that Dr. Chalmers would ask anyone to give money to continue an inoperative opinion that the State should support the Church, as it was equally inconceivable that Scotch people would give a penny to conserve such an opinion.

The Scotch people are a practical people, and Dr. Chalmers was eminently a practical man. In asking money from the Scotch people he laid before them a definite object, and this object was plainly

[1] *The Later "Church and State" Opinions of Dr. Chalmers*, by S. Williamson, M.P. 1891.

put before the General Assembly in the speech which he delivered at the close of the Assembly of 1843.[1] It was printed along with the speech in which reference is made to voluntaryism. In the later speech not a word is said about the duty of the State to support the Church. Throughout he contends only for one principle, the liberty of the Church to direct its own affairs, and he contends for this principle because the carrying out of it is necessary for what was the real object of the trust, namely, to preach the gospel to all. A few extracts will show this. The speech begins with the following words :—"The deliberations," he says, "for I cannot call them the debates, of the Assembly, are now terminated. We have reason to bless God for a harmony that has been quite marvellous. Let us rejoice in it as a token for good; and may He who turneth the spirits of men whithersoever He will, turn this common enthusiasm on behalf of great and high objects, into an instrument for the growth of charity and cordial affection among all Christians, that they may at length rally around one and the same standard, and go forth with one heart and one hand on the mighty enterprise of spreading the gospel everywhere, and achieving, both at home and abroad, the further triumphs of our faith."

[1] The Addresses delivered at the commencement of the First General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland by Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D. Printed from Dr. Chalmers's manuscript, Edinburgh, 1843.

Referring to the Established Church constituted by the remanent members, he says: "But, then, in regard to principles—the same gospel—the gospel pre-eminently of truth, and of truth unswerving, and by which we are laid under the duty of preaching its doctrines to every creature under heaven—this said gospel tells of our imperative obligation to declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing from the view of others which possesses a sacred or religious importance in our own eyes. Let us come at once, then, to the application. That one principle we must surely deem to be of some importance, and must hold in some estimation, for which, rather than renounce it, we have given up our all. Even though, through our keeping by this principle, and proclaiming it everywhere, the Scottish Establishment, now the stronghold of that Erastianism which has driven us from its bowers, should be laid prostrate in the dust, and along with it the subsistence of all its dependent families—surely you cannot expect that the principle which we could not give up for the sake of our own livings, we must now give up and cease to act upon for the sake of the livings of other people."

And further on he says: "Now, the establishment of a pure gospel throughout Scotland in all its principles, and the consequent overthrow of all its opposing errors—that is our object, that is our landing-place. In the prosecution of this object hitherto we

have been driven from our offices and our homes—that is but the incidental accompaniment; and no one will say, surely, it was for the sake of this that we have maintained the independence of the Church in things spiritual. Now, what we have held it our duty to maintain, we shall still hold it our duty to propagate; and let us suppose it as one of the collateral effects that the establishment is demolished and that all its remanent clergy are also driven from their offices and their houses. Most assuredly it is as little for the sake of such an infliction upon their families as it has been for the sake of an infliction upon ours that we have either maintained the doctrine of the Church's liberties hitherto or will henceforth continue to proclaim it everywhere."

Dr. Chalmers, as was his wont, reiterates the idea; and the object of the trust, as far as he was concerned and those who agreed with him, was to secure "the labours of a free and extended and well-supported ministry of the gospel," and thus spread the knowledge of the gospel over the length and breadth of the land.

This was the conception of the movement inside the Free Church, and the same conception prevailed outside. One proof of this may be mentioned. A sermon was published in 1844 "On the Claims of the Free Church of Scotland to the Sympathy and Assistance of American Christians," by Thomas Smyth, D.D., minister of the Presbyterian Church,

Charleston, South Carolina, and on the basis of it a collection was made. Mr. Smyth prints the names of the collectors, the Honourable the Mayor heading the list, and states that "these collectors, who all cheerfully consented to act, are members of ten different churches in this city, and of *seven* denominations." Probably these seven denominations did not hold the opinion that the State ought to endow churches, and certainly would not have contributed to propagate such an opinion.

The five lords seem to me, therefore, wrong in their conclusion as to what the purposes of the trust were, if they "are to be ascertained by what the donors of the trust funds thought about it, or what we are constrained to infer would be their views if it were possible to consult them." There ought to be no doubt now what the original donors thought about the matter. Since the trial abundant evidence of every kind has turned up. The opinions of all the great leaders of the Disruption have been collected and set forth by Mr. Hector MacPherson in his *Scottish Church Crisis* (1904). The actual circular asking for subscriptions has been unearthed, and there is not a word about the establishment principle in it. And I think the belief must be general that Dr. Chalmers and his colleagues would have denounced the decision of the five judges as based on an entire misapprehension of the object and motives of their action at the time of the Disruption. The

one motive which they put prominently forward is the acquisition of the right for their Church to deal with religious affairs as they should deem most advantageous for the spread of the gospel. And it is in the exercise of this right that the Majority Free Church changed its mind in regard to the relations between Church and State. The members of it naturally thought that the State ought to help the Church in its efforts to extend civilisation; but when they found that freedom from State control drew out an extraordinary measure of liberality, they came to the conclusion that the Church was more likely to effect its object by appealing to the hearts and consciences of the people, and that personal interest in the evangelisation of the country, shown by personal self-denial, was a better way to win over the masses to Christ than by using national funds under unfavourable conditions.

The decision of the five lords rests entirely on two questions. First, Did the Majority Free Church abandon any doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith? There is no conclusive proof that it did, but the evidence goes all the other way. Second, Did the donors of the funds in question give them on condition that the trustees shall adhere to the establishment principle? Here again there is no evidence. At best there is nothing but some statements which do not warrant the inference, and many clear and positive statements which warrant an opposite inference.

Out of this review of the case a serious question arises as to the future of Free Churches. The Majority Free Church asked the best legal opinion that could be got in regard to the union which they intended to form with the United Presbyterian Church and its effect on the financial position of both Churches, and they were guided in all their actions by men who are regarded as the soundest lawyers. The four Scotch judges who were intimately acquainted with the facts of the case agreed with the opinions of the advising lawyers. And three out of the eight judges who sat on the case from the House of Lords were also convinced that the advising lawyers were right. The two House of Lords judges who gave their decision to this effect showed also a thorough knowledge of the history and aims of the Scotch Churches concerned. But five judges decided that the Scotch advising lawyers were wrong, that the four Scotch judges were wrong, and that the three House of Lords judges were wrong. Here is complete confusion. How can one trust any legal opinion after this? What security can Free Churches obtain after this that they may not be deprived of institutions which their own money has set up? In fact, the feeling naturally arises that there is no certainty in law, that our laws are so bad that they cannot be clearly interpreted, and that it is a mere chance as to what legal decisions may be pronounced. Something must be wrong

here. In these circumstances one naturally asks whether the constitution of the legal House of Lords has not something very far wrong in it. And one cannot help thinking that prejudices had a share in the conclusions to which the five judges came.

First they seem to have not been able to adhere strictly to the idea of trust. The idea of a Church and a Church established by law was constantly floating before them, and they applied to a Church which had fought out its freedom ideas which belong to a Church which has entered into a compact with the State and is bound by Acts of Parliament.

But, secondly, and much more palpably, their attitude to the question of establishment was clearly a political attitude. That there ought to be an Established Church is one of the most important Articles of the Conservative creed. It stands in the very front rank of the Conservative programme, and the five judges had evidently taken with them the attitude of the question as a party question into the consideration of the question as an article of a Church's position. Now in a Church the opinion is of no validity as a doctrine. In none of the Churches of Scottish origin had it any prominent place. A man might hold pronounced opinions on the great advantage which State connexion might give to the spread of the gospel and yet be a member of a dissenting Church. And in the Established Church it was not unusual to find men who believed that

disestablishment might be advantageous to the community. The Majority Free Church came to believe that the connexion of the State with the Church was unnecessary, and that the spontaneous liberality of its members was a greater aid and a surer method of spreading the gospel. But no obligation was laid on its ministers or members to agree to this, and a large number still clung to the idea of a connexion with the State. The United Presbyterian Church's opinion on the matter was almost exclusively political, for it was that it was not fair to spend money belonging to the whole nation on an ecclesiastical institution which represented only about a half of the nation, and which ought to be well able to support its own institutions without aid from these national funds. But it is different with the Conservative party. To be a member of it one is expected to stand up for the maintenance of an established and endowed Church. And this Conservative belief, again and again urged by some of the five judges in their political agitations and speeches, seems unconsciously to have biassed their decisions in a matter which ought to have had no concern with politics. And this is not the only case. A feeling prevails that some of the judges of the House of Lords have been unconsciously biassed in their judicial judgments by their political prepossessions. The mode of their election to their high offices tends to strengthen this idea. They are made

judges not on account of their great legal knowledge and skill, but because they have been keen and successful partisans of a political party. The consequence of this is that the uncertainties of law bulk largely in the public mind. Men who are at the present time entrusted with the preparation of bills do not seem to be able or willing to make laws in which the meaning of their provisions is clearly expressed. The legal officials who ought to be able to explain them differ widely from each other in their explanations, and it is a mere chance what may be the decision of the final court of appeal. The career of the judge ought therefore from the commencement to be kept clear from politics, and the two careers—that of judge and that of politician—should be separated from the beginning. It would also be a great advantage if the career of the advocate should be separated from that of the judge. The advocate is trained by practice to see only one side with emphasis, and when he becomes a judge he is apt to continue this attitude of mind and view one of the parties in the case as his clients. But whatever may be the remedies, it is evident that there is much need of some remedy if the public are to have confidence in our legal administration.

Much stress has been laid on the fact that the decision of the House of Lords is final. But this finality simply means that the parties must submit to the decision until some means is discovered of altering it.

Legal ingenuity is always clever enough at finding out some loophole. New evidence may turn up; new issues may be laid before new judges involving on a wider plane the old issues. And it is allowed on all hands that no nation should permit injustice to continue, whatever may be the legal basis for it. Measures must be taken to do what is right, whatever may happen. In this case we have a repetition of what took place at the Disruption. If the statesmen who caused the Disruption had known the Scottish character and history, the Disruption would never have taken place. And when Parliament afterwards yielded to the arguments put forward at the Disruption, it was too late, and probably the breach between the Churches was then not narrowed but widened by the action of Parliament. The five judges appear to me to have made the same mistake as the statesmen of 1843. They have shown ignorance of Scotch history and Scotch institutions in dealing with the matters of fact on which the whole case hinged.

CHAPTER VII

THE CREED OF THE MINORITY FREE CHURCH

Sec. I.—THE PEOPLE

It is very difficult to get an exact idea of what the Minority Free Church believes. In the *Scottish Church and University Almanac*, 1905, a list of the Minority Free Church ministers is supplied by Mr. J. Hay Thorburn, and may therefore be trusted as correct. Their number is thirty-three. Five of these put M.A. after their names. The others have no degree of any kind. Not one of them has the degree of B.D., the degree which is gained by the distinguished divinity students of our Scottish Universities. As far as I can find out, no one of the ministers has given an exposition of the doctrines of their Church, or has written any work of any kind. And even if we knew what these ministers believed, the knowledge would not probably enable us to know what the people of the Church believed—for in past times the lay element has been the more powerful force in determining the character of the Church.

Some information might be gathered from the trial, but the testimony of counsel would not count for much, for the advocates of the Minority Free Church simply, as it was their duty to do, chose such points as might serve to gain a victory, and some of these doctrinal arguments were repudiated by prominent members of the Church after the decision was made known.

We must therefore obtain our idea of the religious attitude and beliefs of the Church from what we have seen and heard, and from those who have had a like experience.

The notable feature about the Minority Free Church is that it consists almost exclusively of Highlanders. There are a few Lowlanders that sympathise deeply with them, and hold the same opinions as they do on most points. They are remnants of bodies that were united with the Majority Free Church —United Original Seceders, Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. They are ardent admirers of the Covenanters, and hold that the religious ideas and practices of the olden times should be strictly adhered to. But they are regarded as relics of bygone times, entirely out of harmony with the spirit of the present age. They have been left in the wilderness because they have fallen out of the marching ranks of intellectual humanity.

It is somewhat different with the Highlanders.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century nearly all the vigorous poor population of the Highlands were removed from their hills. They went to Canada, to the United States, and to the large cities of Scotland and England, and in all these places expelled Celts have occupied high and influential positions, and have done excellent service to their adopted countries. There remained behind a sluggish people opposed to all modern improvements. In the cultivation of the land they clung to their ancestral implement, the caschròm, principally made of wood and used by the hand, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they were persuaded to take to the modern plough. They were unwilling to adopt new methods in every other line of labour or trade. They were equally conservative in their religion. They adhered to the beliefs and forms of worship which had prevailed from covenanting times. They had been deeply impressed by the Puritan movement. They regarded the Sabbath with peculiar sacredness. They believed that it was not lawful to shave on that day, or cook, or take a walk, or speak or think their own thoughts. They deemed it wrong to read any secular book. They must read only the Bible and some religious works. They knew little of the New Testament, and had no great taste for it. They were steeped in the atmosphere of Jewish thought. Their religion was closely akin to that of Kruger and his Boers. They had a strong conviction that the wrath

of God rested on those who differed from them, and they had no hesitation in employing brute force to carry out that wrath. At the same time, they saw endless visions and dreamed many dreams which they believed were inspired by heaven. Some of them could foretell the future. In these visions the Virgin Mary did not present herself as she does regularly in Roman Catholic countries. The saints of the early Church did not come near them. I doubt if Christ ever made a visible appearance to them. But they saw the Devil continually. He appeared to various members of the community in widely separate districts at one and the same time. He frightened them by unearthly noises, made heaps of stones rattle, blasted their fields at the instigation of witches, and was ever present with them disturbing their devotions and making mischief in one form or another. And, as might be expected from their circumstances, their religion took a gloomy turn. Their singing of the psalms was a wail. They did not partake of the sacrament till a good old age, when they thought that death could not be far off.

When the Disruption of 1843 took place they nearly all left the Established Church. They stoned those who ventured to go on Sundays to the parish churches. They regarded these places as the haunts of the Devil. One of their ablest ministers described the Established Church as "a Christ-denying, God-dishonouring, and soul-destroying Church," and

similar language was used throughout the parishes of the Highlands. Those who remained within the Establishment attributed the defection of the Highlanders to their gross ignorance. The Established minister of Golspie thus explained the event :—[1]

"It must, however, be admitted that, in common with a large proportion of their countrymen, the religion of many of the native population of the lower class is not without serious and inveterate errors. Christian conversion, in their view, essentially consists, not in the forsaking of wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts, and in returning from these to the Lord, but in another sort of change not distinctly connected with a moral life. A set of illiterate, fanatical, and disorderly, self-appointed teachers of religion have, by their wild and mystical rhapsodies, acquired a baneful ascendant over the ignorant minds of the lower orders of the people not only in this county, but in other parts of the Highlands. In the mouths of these teachers prayer is irreverently perverted into mere discussion, virtually addressed, not to God, but to the hearers, and frequently degenerates into bitter personalities and invectives. By these deluding and often deluded persons the metaphorical parts of the Holy Scriptures are received and taught in the literal sense, and the plainest parts are very often allegorised.

[1] *Sutherland and the Sutherlanders: Their Religious and Social Condition.* Edinburgh. 1844, p. 12.

Not unfrequently the Scriptures are considered as a mere secondary thing of little avail; and that pastor who studies them closely and critically, and expounds them in their true sense, is regarded as if he were dealing with occult and unhallowed sciences."

The same writer, in alluding to the comparatively small number of communicants in so large a population (only 70 out of 1,149), gives the following account of it:—

"The chief cause of it is, that the views generally entertained by the lower classes of the nature of the Lord's Supper are inveterately superstitious. Very many of those, who are not only decent in their lives, but even religious, are laid grey-headed in their graves without having once engaged in the Christian duty of the Lord's Supper. Where the population of many parishes, consisting of several thousands are assembled in one parish, it is evident, indeed, that, with other evils, there cannot be the due proportion of communicants. On some occasions, too, the strange anomaly exists in these parts of many of the illiterate laity being permitted to address those large assemblages of people who but too generally regard their doctrines as the dictates of inspiration."

The minister of Golspie describes accurately the religious sentiments of the Highlanders, but he is altogether unfair to the leaders who were honest, God-fearing men, intent on benefiting their fellow-elects and sympathising deeply with the sorrows and

sufferings of their fellow-countrymen. They held strong democratic opinions. Probably the Lord Chancellor is the first among peers that has had the high honour of being blessed by them.

After the Disruption, strong progressive forces arose within the Free Church. Dr. Chalmers himself was one of these. He claimed that his Church was free in religious matters. He had the daring to lecture on geology while he was at the University of St. Andrews. Liberal articles and expositions of German theology appeared in the *North British Review*. He welcomed them, but he regretted that he was too old to follow the trains of thought and inquiry suggested by them. The progress went on till the union with the United Presbyterians. The New College was the best-equipped divinity hall in Scotland, and many of its professors have taken a prominent part in investigations into the history of the Old and New Testaments and in cognate subjects. This forward movement created a split among the Highlanders. A goodly proportion of those who remained in the Highlands and spoke and understood only Gaelic, refused to move. Their kinsmen in the colonies, the United States, and in our great cities have done splendid work in theological science and literature, and the names of Mackay, Macpherson, and McIntosh, and other Celtic names occupy distinguished positions among contributors to theological inquiry. But a large number of the people in the

old homes have remained stubborn and immovable. They held, for instance, that the science of geology was opposed to the account of creation in Genesis, and they therefore denounced all geologists as heretical and infidel. I once asked Mr. Kennedy, an excellent geologist, who was for a long time minister of Dornoch, why he did not broach the subject to his congregation. He replied: "My congregation would stone me if I ventured to whisper such a thing as geology." Hugh Miller's geological studies brought on him the wildest abuse in his native town and county. Mr. Carnegie has made an interesting statement on this matter in his address delivered at the Dedication of the Hugh Miller Institute:—

"You all know the excitement caused by the *Old Red Sandstone*—how vehemently your gifted son was abused. His orthodoxy was assailed by the clergy and churchmen, especially in the Highlands; his books were denounced and excluded from many homes as atheistical. Let me tell you of an incident in my own experience, which vividly reveals the alarm he aroused. Three years ago we were honoured by a visit at Skibo from the Speaker of the House of Congress in Washington, Colonel Henderson. Speaking of the various points of interest around Skibo, Cromarty was mentioned. Immediately he asked: 'Where Hugh Miller was born, he who wrote the *Old Red Sandstone?* Could you take me there? I wish to make a pilgrimage to his grave. He was

the cause of my brother and myself leaving our father's house. My dear old father regarded his books as heretical, and therefore the work of Satan, and prohibited us from reading them. To this we said we could not agree, and when my father found, to his great grief, that his two boys believed what Hugh Miller had written, we had to leave our home. His roof should cover no doubters of the Mosaic record. He allowed us to remain away for two years, and then we received a letter entreating us to return, and saying that he had been 'wrong, all wrong. Come back and read Miller's books, and any books of that kind you like.'"

The Highlanders clung firmly to the doctrine of election in the form in which the Lord Chancellor interpreted the Confession of Faith. An eminent preacher, whom I often heard when a student, denounced the preaching of the gospel to all. The object of preaching, he stated, was one of the outward and the principal means appointed by God to make the elect become partakers of the Covenant, and the surest way to effect this was by holding before them the terrors of hell and the fearful judgments that awaited all those who did not accept the gospel. There was no use in preaching to those who were not elect, but as the elect were not known to him, therefore he had to preach the gospel everywhere. The Highlanders who held this belief about the elect had good assurance in themselves that they were in the

number of the elect, and this belief still seems to exist, for Principal Alexander calls them the Saints of God. The number of the elect is necessarily very small. No idolater can be of the elect. All Roman Catholics and Ritualists have no chance of salvation. All the higher critics are sure of eternal damnation. Out of the whole population of the world, estimated at 1,479,729,000, not more than 10,000 to 20,000 can possibly reach heaven or be elect, and the number in all, probably, must be reckoned at a tenth of that number, for they think that there are hypocritical and lukewarm Christians even among themselves. It is astonishing that men should exist with such ideas. But it has to be remembered that these Highlanders are an isolated, simple people, with little intercourse with the great world and vague conceptions of it, and that they regard their conclusions as inevitable inferences from the declarations of Scripture.

These people held also that only elect children could be saved. I once heard Mr. Milne, a missionary sent by the London Missionary Society to China, deliver an address on China. In eloquent words he portrayed the hopeless state of the millions of Chinese, but said that there was some alleviation of the wretchedness of such a thought by the belief that at least the children of China would be saved. At the end of the address an eminent professor of the Free Church rose up in the lentrin, or circular

range of seats in which the elders sat, and in scathing words protested against the damnable doctrine propounded by the missionary. It was quite certain, he said, that only elect children would be saved, and elect children meant the children of elect parents, and that there was no hope for the children of China. It was the decree of God that it should be so, and we should not question it.

The subject of creed which is most prominent in the minds of the members of the Minority Free Church is the position of the Bible. They believe that every word of the Old and New Testaments has been dictated by God, that consequently there is no error in these books from beginning to end, and that all their declarations in regard to the earth and heaven and hell, and the inhabitants of them, are to be taken as exactly accurate and certainly true. But we may doubt as to what book they regard as the Bible. If they were to follow the Confession of Faith, the Bible would be formed of the Old Testament Books in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. But exceedingly few of them know Hebrew or Greek. And it is likely that they regard the Gaelic translation as inspired. However this may be, they set their faces against all inquiry into the history or textual criticism of the books. They stand by the decision of the Scribes and Pharisees in regard to the Old Testament, and by the opinions that became prevalent in the Catholic Church of the fourth century in regard to the New Testament. They

also follow the Jews and the Christians of the early and middle ages in employing allegory to a great extent in their interpretations. One of their favourite books at Communion services is the Song of Solomon. They look on most modern commentaries as far wrong. They regard all the men who, as they state it, have tampered with the Bible as infidels. They would expel every professor of theology in the English and Scotch Universities from the Church, and would have nothing to do with people who listen to the higher criticism. All the efforts of scholars to understand the Scriptures and to trace the history of the various books they regard as abomination.

They are equally conservative in their forms of worship. They object to all modern hymns, and use only psalms. They thus never refer to Christ in their singing; often sing that death is the end of all men, and never utter words that would indicate a sure belief in a future state of bliss. The word Trinity cannot occur in their songs of praise. They object also to the use of instrumental music, especially the organ. They sing the words of Psalm cl. at their English services:—

> Praise him with trumpet's sound, his praise
> With psaltery advance;
> With timbrel, harp, stringed instruments
> And organs, in the dance.
> Praise him on cymbals loud.
> Blow trumpets at new moon, what day
> Our feast appointed is.

But they would probably stone the man who brought harp and timbrel and psaltery and trumpet into any of their churches.

They stand when prayer is offered up. They have probably no idea that the earlier Christians also stood on Sunday during prayers, and it is likely that the only reason why they stand is because it was an old custom arising from the circumstance that in early days many of the Scotch churches had no regular seats. They now sit during singing, possibly to vary the exercise of their muscles.

The old custom also prevailed with them, and may prevail still, of the precentor reading or chanting the psalm line by line before the singing thereof. When it was proposed by some that this custom should be given up, the proposal caused serious divisions in several of the churches and much bitterness of spirit.

These are some of the beliefs and practices of the Minority Free Church; but, as I said before, no authoritative exposition of their beliefs has been made as far as I know, and the large majority of the members of Minority Free Churches are not capable of comprehending some of the most important dogmas in the Confession of Faith. They are also all undergoing modifications of their attitude to religious questions unconsciously and in harmony with the change in their temperament and the circumstances of the time. And no doubt the prominence which they now occupy before the public will bring

enlightenment. They, like their kindred in the colonies, will make great advances. Probably they will return to their old Church connexions, and some of them will distinguish themselves in the field of the historical and literary criticism of the books of the Old and New Testaments.

Sec. II.—THE PROFESSORS

We might have expected some light on the beliefs of the Minority Free Church from the writings of the Professors, whom their leaders have appointed to the chairs in their newly constituted college. All of these, with possibly the exception of Mr. Hamilton, Professor of Hebrew, of whom I know nothing, have written books on religious and historical questions, but none of the four belonged to the Minority Free Church. One, now Principal of the College, was, I understand, a United Free Church Probationer, Dr. W. Menzies Alexander, M.A., B.SC., B.D., C.M., and M.D. The second, the Rev. John Urquhart, was a Baptist, and probably still remains one. The third, Rev. James Kerr, D.D., is a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, one of the eight ministers belonging to that denomination ; and the fourth, Mr. D. Hay Fleming, LL.D., who lectures only once a week, belongs to the Original Secession. It is singular that not one minister of the Minority Free Church was deemed fit for any of these three professorships or for the lectureship.

The writings of these Professors and Lecturers indicate to some extent the line of thought which the Minority Free Church intends to follow. But the election of Dr. Alexander presents a puzzle to the outsider. He has written a book on demonic possession. A few extracts will show how he treats the writers of the Synoptic Gospels. In discussing the cure of the demoniac, who claimed to be called Legion, and the escape into the swine generally known as Gadarene, but which Dr. Alexander, in harmony with the best results of textual criticism, calls Gerasene,[1] he sums up the statements of the Synoptics, on what he styles "the alleged transmigration of the demons," as follows:—

"1. The demons, having gone out, departed into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea and died in the waters. (Matt. viii. 32.)

"2. The filthy spirits, having gone forth, entered into the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep, some two thousand of them, and began to be choked in the sea. (Mark v. 13.)

"3. The demons, having gone out of the man, entered into the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake and were choked. (Luke viii. 33.)"

In discussing these statements and the rest of the narrative of the Synoptics, he says:—

[1] *Demonic Possession in the New Testament*, Edinburgh, 1902.

"We recognise here a solid nucleus of fact, which remains after the application of the canons of historical criticism. That unassailable residuum comprises the cure of the demoniac and the precipitation of the swine.

"We recognise here also a certain theory of this occurrence. The facts are separable from the theory, and furnish material for testing its validity. The facts remain unchallenged; the soundness of the theory is legitimate matter of inquiry."

Dr. Alexander then quotes the words of the three gospels, Matthew viii. 31, 32; Mark v. 9, 10, 12, 13; and Luke viii. 30–32, and proceeds:—

"These remarkable differences of the triple tradition give us the theory emergent from the facts:—

"1. The prayer of the demoniac becomes the prayer of the demons themselves.

"2. Leave to remain in the district becomes a request to escape the abyss.

"3. The word, Go—is interpreted as permission to enter into the swine."

He then expounds his own attitude to the Synoptics:—

"The case seems to be regarded as one of multiple or manifold possession. 'Many demons were entered into him.' But that was an opinion which Jesus did not hold. The evidence on the point is perfectly clear.

"Mark has these oscillations:—

The man is in an unclean spirit. v. 2.
He cried, What is there between me and thee? v. 7.
Jesus said, Come out of the man, unclean spirit. v. 8.
The man besought him not to send the demons away. v. 10.
The unclean spirit besought him, Send us into the swine. v. 12.
Jesus suffered them to enter the swine. v. 13.
The spirits, having come out, entered the swine. v. 13.

"*Jesus allows of only one demon throughout; Mark has one also in v.* 2. *The demoniac surmises a multitude; so does Mark in v.* 12, 13.

"Luke has these oscillations:—

The man has demons. viii. 27.
He cried, What is there between me and thee? viii. 28.
Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to go forth. viii. 29.
The unclean spirit had seized him many times. viii. 29.
He was driven by the demon into the wilderness. viii. 29.
He said, Legion; for many demons had entered into him. viii. 30.
The demons besought him not to order them off to hell. viii. 31.
The demons besought permission to enter the swine. viii. 32.
The demons, having come out of the man, entered the swine. viii. 33.

"*Jesus allows of only one demon throughout; Luke has one also in viii.* 29. *The demoniac surmises a multitude; so does Luke in viii.* 30, 31, 32, 33."

Here both Mark and Luke are wrong. In fact the demons did not and could not go into the swine. There was first of all only one demon to go. And, second, the theory is wrong that demons went into animals. Christ did not sanction such an idea. So thinks Dr. Alexander. "Neither direction to enter the swine, nor permission to do so, nor compensation for disturbance can be thought of here." Dr. Alexander undertakes to explain the stampede of the swine in a natural way. "There may have been an initial restlessness among the herd," before the cure of the demoniac owing to the state of the weather. Then came "the fierce yells of the maniac." "But above those wild shouts of the maniac rose the voice of Christ," and the other accompaniments "were more than sufficient to arouse the most stolid creatures. Each interjectional episode was stormier than its predecessor, till the terror of the swine, passing beyond all control, projected them, down the steep declivity, over the narrow foreshore, almost in a solid mass, into the waters. The whole series of events was probably comprised within a few moments."

Dr. Alexander also supposes that "the plunging of the herd of swine into the waters may have been

less fatal than is commonly supposed. These animals are excellent swimmers. No higher authority for this statement can be found than Heilprin. When discussing the migration of animals, he says: 'The domestic pig even at a very young age, has been known to swim five or six miles; and it is not exactly impossible that the wild hog, in cases of absolute necessity, might successfully attempt a passage of three or four times this distance.' Huxley betrays no inkling of this fact, which is rather damaging to his advocacy of the imaginary claims of the 'Gadarene Swinefolk.'"

Dr. Alexander gives another instance of the boldness with which he treats the statements of the Evangelists in connexion with what he calls the "Gerasene Affair." He notices the fact that Matthew mentions "*two* demoniacs where the other Synoptists have but one," and thus remarks on the discrepancy: "We have thus to consider two men suffering from the most furious mania, both manifesting the same homicidal propensities, both harbouring the same delusions, both practising the same mutilations, and both uttering the same menaces. How two lunatics, animated by such terrible passions, could dwell together in unity, 'for a long time,' surpasses comprehension. The theory of *folie à deux* is inadequate to the occasion, and the circumstances raise an inherent, if not an invincible, doubt as to the accuracy of this detail."

The whole exposition, as will be seen, is a daring piece of the higher criticism, and the context only deepens this impression. Indeed, the book itself is throughout the work of an able scholar well versed in historical research, and in the modern methods of it. The reasons which lead him to doubt the accuracy of the Gospels have a close resemblance to those which induced one of the greatest pagan opponents of early Christianity to discredit the Gospel narratives, as we learn from Macarius Magnes. Dr. Alexander, taking advantage of his medical knowledge, affirms that all the symptoms of diseases attributed to the demoniacs are symptoms of diseases well known to medical men. Several German medical men, some of them of great eminence, have followed the same line of thought, especially Ebstein; but Ebstein goes further, and maintains that all the cures can be paralleled in the history of modern medicine.[1] Dr. Alexander stopped short of this, and apparently has stopped altogether since he became Principal of the Minority Free Church College. He has written a letter to say that his conclusions about the demoniacs and the swine were not regarded by him as final, but as simply tentative in part, and he states that his "views in these respects were unnecessary and immature speculations." Every investigator has the right to change his opinions, and

[1] *Die Medizin im Neuen Testament und im Talmud.* (Stuttgart, 1903.)

surely no one regards an inquirer as a wise man who comes in this world to final conclusions on historical and theological questions. Indeed, it is quite possible that as Dr. Alexander is a man of wide and varied culture, and has shown a gift for bold inquiry, his present attitude is unconsciously to himself a mere suspension of research, and not a final closure of it.

Mr. Urquhart's works reveal a widely different state of mind. Mr. Urquhart has read and travelled much, knows Hebrew and Greek well, and has studied some of the best books on textual criticism. He holds that every word in the Bible has been dictated by God, and that there is no inaccuracy in any of the books of the Old and New Testament. But it is doubtful whether he believes that all the words in our Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament have come down to us as God dictated them. And whether this be so or not, he allows that there are discrepancies, but they are seeming and not real discrepancies. His mode of treating these is seen in one of his books, with the title: *How Old is Man? Some misunderstood chapters in Scripture Chronology* (1904). In chapter ii. he points out a remarkable discrepancy: "Here, then," he says, "the identical period described in the Old Testament as extending over 480 years is said in the New Testament to have really extended to 573 years" (1 Kings vi. 1 and Acts xiii. 19). As God, it is argued, dictated both passages, and must therefore

have known the dates perfectly, He must have had some object for dictating the discrepancy. It is for the Christian to find out what was His purpose. Of course, it is not stated anywhere. Apparently, after the lapse of long ages, and now in these last days, Mr. Urquhart has discovered it. The difference between 480 and 573 is 93. But 93 of the years mentioned constitute a special period. "They summed up the times of national humiliation and servitude," and therefore the number of these years was suppressed in 1 Kings as a warning to Israel not to forsake God. "Could anything," he says, "be more effective, as an enforcement of this warning, than the blotting out of those 93 years in which God had been compelled to abandon his people?" Mr. Urquhart further explains that the number 480 is symbolical.

Mr. Urquhart next deals with "the Genealogy of our Lord in Matthew's Gospel." He easily explains how the statement is correct that from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations, though Matthew mentions only thirteen, including Christ. But a greater difficulty meets him. In Matt. i. 8 occur the words, "And Joram begat Ozias." "Joram, or Jehoram," he says, "was not the father, but the great-great-grandfather of Uzziah or Ozias." This feature of the genealogy has been discussed by many commentators, and various explanations have been offered. Mr. Urquhart's is not

entirely new. "The omission is intentional and deliberate," he says. The three persons whose names should have been inserted were descendants of Jezebel. "The names of Jezebel's descendants who prolonged her influence and sought to complete her evil work are blotted out with hers." De Wette mentions a similar suggestion with a mark of astonishment. "According to *Ebr.*, to exclude them as descendants of the heathen Athalia from the succession to the theocratic throne!" The mark of admiration is well deserved. If an ordinary historian were to frame a genealogical table on the plan of excluding all who did not please him, though they were in the direct line, he would be deemed to have lost his senses. The method of Mr. Urquhart creates complete distrust in the accuracy of the Bible, as there may be always some hidden reason for introducing discrepancies, which may be discovered only after lapses of centuries, and only by such men as Mr. Urquhart, and even then there is no guarantee of the correctness of the guess of the new prophet that attempts to solve the riddles of the Bible. The method reminds me of a laborious work carried out to its end by a revered and beautiful old schoolmaster of Haddington. He thought that only the consonants of the Hebrew Bible were dictated by God, and that the reason why God did not dictate the vowels was that He had so arranged the consonants that vowels could be inserted by readers in such a way that the

words could become the Word of God in every language. He applied his idea by filling in the vowels so as to produce the whole Bible in Anglo-Scotch.[1] The next verses in Scripture with which Mr. Urquhart deals occur in 1 Samuel xiii. 1, 2. There he says: "In Authorised Version we read: 'Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel.'" But this translation is wrong according to Mr. Urquhart. It ought to be: "Saul was a year old when he began to reign; and he reigned two years over Israel." This is a Scripture statement after Mr. Urquhart's own heart. God must have had some great lesson behind His figures or He would not have made such a strange statement. It gives him an opportunity of suggesting a solution which has occurred to no other person. But we have already produced specimens of his solutions, and need say no more on that point. We refer to his treatment of the verses in order to quote what he says in regard to the Revised Version of the passage, which runs thus: "Saul was (*thirty*) years old when he began to reign." A marginal note is placed at the word "*thirty*" to this effect: "The Hebrew has, '*Saul was a year old.*' The whole verse is omitted in the unrevised Septuagint, but in a later recension the number thirty is inserted." "This is a typical

[1] *Notice of Six Biblico-Classical MS. Works*, by Rev. William Whyte. Edinburgh, 1872.

instance of the daring and the deficiencies of the Revised Version. It actually ventures to change the text; and upon what is the venture based? Upon a confessedly late addition to the Septuagint translation! But if its alteration of the text is wanton, the attempted justification in its marginal note is atrocious. And this is not a solitary instance."

The rest of the book is occupied with ingenious dislocations of numbers, and his conclusion is that the "old chronology must be discarded," *i.e.* all the previous systems of Biblical chronology are wrong, and Mr. Urquhart's system is alone right. According to his system, 8,167 years probably elapsed between the creation of Adam and the birth of Christ, and we have in 1904, "10,071 years as the probable duration of human life upon earth." He speaks rather contemptuously of the "inflated Egyptian chronology," and he must believe that geologists are guilty of the wildest extravagances.

Mr. Urquhart has written another book which deserves mention here. It is entitled, *How to Read the Bible.* In it he shows acquaintance with a few of the best writers on textual criticism, and he bases his conclusions, to some extent, on the processes of modern textual criticism. If he lectures on this subject to his students, he will have to introduce them to the text-books and principal authorities on it; and what will the result be? Nearly all the great authorities of the present day are against

Mr. Urquhart. If anyone were to follow his method in editing a classical text, he would be regarded as incompetent for the work. And are the students likely to struggle against the overwhelming current simply to yield to Mr. Urquhart's inclinations? Mr. Urquhart will, I should think, prove a professor most dangerous to the continued existence of the Minority Free Church.

The third professor, the Rev. James Kerr, D.D., has published a number of pamphlets, and edited such books as the *Scots Worthies*. He is an ardent admirer of the Covenanters and Scottish Martyrs, and evidently a most industrious student. His books are rather difficult to procure. I have before me a pamphlet written by him, and published in 1903. It is entitled, "The Higher Criticism: Disastrous Results: Professors Smith, Dods, and Denney. I. The Bible Deposed; II. The Heathen Deceived; III. The Redeemer Despised; IV. The Father Dethroned." Dr. Kerr addresses the professors named in his title-page. Here is a specimen: "Dr. Denney, you are Professor of New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology, United Free Church College, Glasgow. The missionaries are teaching in our land that the Bible accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve are historical facts, but you deny this account, and hold that this story is a myth." The short extract reveals the attitude of Dr. Kerr. He places the three professors and all his readers

in a dilemma. They must either believe that the Bible accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve are historical facts, or they are not Christians. So with the other results of what he calls the infidel higher criticism. If anyone believes them, then he deposes the Bible, deceives the heathen, despises the Redeemer, and dethrones the Father. And the matter is so well argued that the inevitable result of Dr. Kerr's representation of the case, in nine instances out of ten, must be that the reader must say, if he accepts the dilemma, "I am quite sure that the geologists are right, and that in many points the Biblical scholars are right, and I have nothing for it but to believe that Christianity is a delusion." Dr. Kerr's pamphlets are thus eminently fitted to promote an intellectual revolt against Christianity, and no doubt he will promote this revolt among his students, and add a stone to the testimony derived from the correspondence of Mr. Henry Drummond. Professor George Smith, who, as his biographer, had to read this correspondence, says with regard to the great numbers who consulted him on their spiritual welfare:[1] "One and all tell how the literal acceptance of the Bible—the faith which finds in it nothing erroneous, nothing defective, and (outside of the sacrifices and Temple) nothing temporary—is what has driven them from religion." Curiously enough, it never strikes Mr. Urquhart and Dr. Kerr that

[1] *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 27.

they may be wrong, and that if they are wrong they are exerting themselves to palm upon their fellow-countrymen books, and passages of books, as dictated by God, which have all the traces of human imperfection.

The fourth, who has been requested to impart instruction to the Minority Free Church students, is my friend Dr. D. Hay Fleming. He has been for a long time a staunch adherent of the Original Secession, and has done much to elucidate the history of the Scottish Martyrs and Covenanters. But modern influences, though he is naturally inclined to resist them, have been playing around him. In dealing with the history of Scotland he adopts all the methods which, when employed in the history of the Jews and their books, awaken such strong antagonistic feelings among the ministers of the Minority Free Church. It is likely that his students will learn these methods, and in the course of time will apply them to all the subjects which come before them. He has also in his introductory address, and the correspondence which ensued upon it, practically, probably unintentionally, abandoned one of the most important of the theological positions of the Minority Free Church. In his apology for the Article in the Confession with regard to the creation in six days, he follows the explanations which were suggested by Professor Mitchell.[1] And we must hold him as agree-

[1] *The Westminster Assembly* (p. 394).

ing with the Professor when he says: "The first of them [charges against the Confession] is the assertion, so often and confidently propounded of late, that the Confession represents the creation of the world as having taken place in six natural or literal days, which almost all orthodox divines now grant it did not." The historical interpretation of the verses in Genesis is thus abandoned by the lecturer of the Minority Free Church and the "figurative interpretation" approved. Professor Mitchell appeals to Philo and Augustine that the figurative interpretation was known long before the period when the Confession of Faith was composed. But all the writers to whom he appeals plainly did not believe that the verses in Genesis were historical. Philo's explanations of the verses are transcendental. He believed that there was an incorporeal world existent in the divine Logos, and free from the limitations of time, and that this world was the model after which the corporeal world was brought into existence. His mystical explanations have much to do with this incorporeal world. He scouts the idea that God required six days to make the world.[1] The number "six" is employed simply to indicate that there was order in the creation of material objects. And then, in another treatise, which is really a continuation of the first, called the *Allegories of Sacred*

[1] *De Opificio Mundi.* (xiii. 3).

Laws, he says: "Exceedingly simple it is to imagine that the world came into existence in six days or at all in time." Professor Mitchell next refers to Augustine, though he might have quoted Origen and other earlier writers who treated the narrative as allegorical. Augustine, in discussing the account of creation, proceeds with all the freedom of modern criticism.[1] He supposes that the language of the verses is appropriate to the angelic conception of creation and of the universe. He notices that before the sun was created, there could not be days properly so called, in this statement not being conscious that the Hebrew mind thought differently, for it is plain that light and darkness were not identified by the Hebrews with the sun, but had separate existences. God did not therefore create the world in six days. Besides this, He did not require six days to make the world. He made the world by his word or command (Psalm xxxiii. 9). And the reason why the Holy Spirit in Genesis describes the work as done in six days is to enable readers to form, by taking one point after another, a vivid picture of all that was done by God's single creative command. The statements in Genesis are not historical but pictorial.[2]

In the *Bibliotheca Sancta of Sixtus*,[3] referred to by

[1] *De Genesi ad Litteram*, lib. iv. 24.
[2] *De Genesi ad Litteram*, iv. 23, 52.
[3] Lib. v. ann. 24, p. 366 (ed. of 1576).

Professor Mitchell, the opinions of the fathers are thus summed up:—

"PHILO, expounding the same passage in the first book of the *Allegories of the Law*, says: 'It is a sign of rustic simplicity to think that the world was created in six days, or indeed in any fixed time, for the whole world is an alternation of days and nights, which the motion of the sun inevitably causes, as it journeys over the earth and under the earth. Moreover, the sun is considered to be a part of the heavens; so that it must be allowed that time was posterior to the world, because it is a product of the world. Now, the motion of the heavens indicated the nature of time, so when you hear, "He completed his work on the sixth day," you must not take it as referring to a certain number of days, but to the perfection of the universe, which is signified by the perfect number six.'

"This view of Philo has been followed by some Catholic authors. Amongst the Latins, Augustine referred the enumeration of six days which Moses made, not to a succession of time, but to the natural order of the works, which is allotted to days, or to the order of the revelation of the six works, which one after another God revealed to the angels.

"Among the Greek authors, Procopius said that the number of days was adopted by Moses, not for the sake of time, but for the sake of instruction, because of the limitations of our understanding, which could

in no other way comprehend the order of created things on account of their multitude.

"Thus, while this dogma must by no means be condemned, yet it must not be so positively asserted that we are to consider as rustic and ignorant the views of Basilius, Gregorius Nyssenus, Chrysostomus, Ambrosius, and the other learned Fathers who have taught that the world was created in the space of six days, especially as the above argument of Philo in no way contradicts their opinion.

"St. Thomas, dealing with this in the first part of his *Summa Theologia*, says: 'Whereas, although before the construction of the firmament there was not the time which measures and follows the motion of the heavens, yet there was a time to measure another motion, namely, that first motion and succession of conceptions and feelings in the angelic minds, in which thoughts could not have arisen in such numbers unless one before another and one after another; but Before and After are nothing else than distinctions of time.'"

Now, if Dr. Fleming accepts the expositions of Philo and Augustine as his explanations of Genesis, then the doctrine that the verses in Genesis are historical is undermined, and with these verses the institution of the Sabbath in Exodus; and there can be no dogmatic objection to treating other portions of Scripture in the same allegorical way.

From this exposition of the opinions of the Minority Free Church professors it will be seen that they do not adhere rigidly to the Confession of Faith or to the dogmas of their predecessors. And the establishment of a college for the students of the Minority Free Church is likely to bring greater modifications of the dogmas and to foster a spirit of inquiry which, as it has done in the Majority Free Church, will in the end produce a revolution, and bring the Minority Free Church back to their old friends, or to the Established Church, or to both united together in one Church.

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